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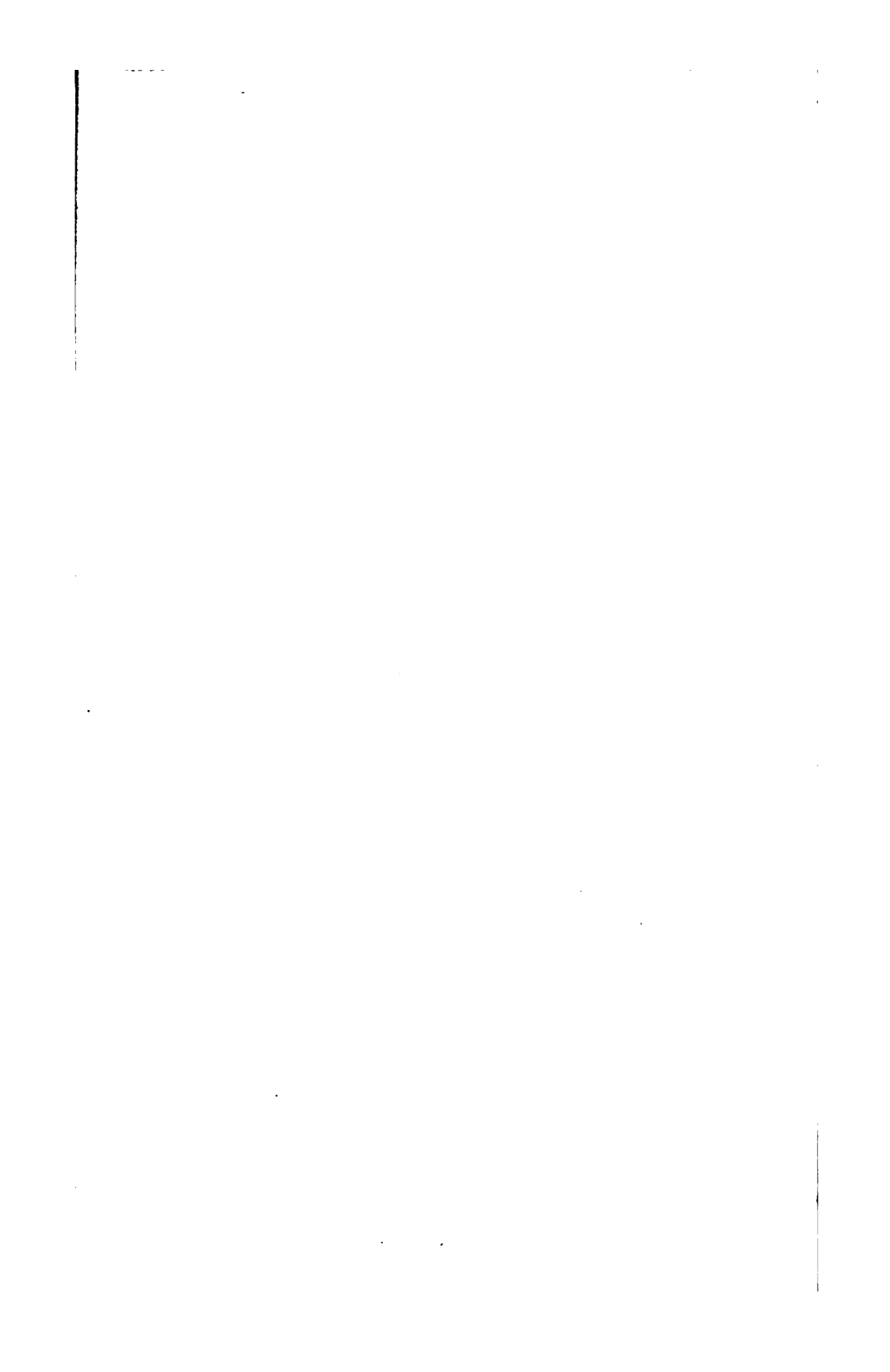
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AN
EXPOSITION
OF THE
NEW TESTAMENT

INTENDED AS AN
INTRODUCTION
TO
THE STUDY OF THE SCRIPTURES,
BY POINTING OUT
The LEADING SENSE and CONNECTION of the
SACRED WRITERS.

By WILLIAM GILPIN, A. M.
PREBENDARY OF SALISBURY, AND
VICAR OF BOLDRE, IN NEW FOREST, NEAR LYMINGTON.

THE FOURTH EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR CADEL AND DAVIES, IN THE STRAND
1811.



TO THE
HONOURABLE AND RIGHT REVEREND
DR. BARRINGTON,
LORD BISHOP OF SALISBURY.

MY LORD,

AMONG the many expositions of the Scriptures, I know none of the kind I now offer, under your Lordship's patronage, to the public. You exactly hit my idea when you called it a *readable* one—in opposition, I suppose, to the generality of expositions, which are too diffuse to be *read* with ease, though much fitter to be *consulted* than mine.

Though

Though I have not the presumption, my Lord, to suppose that mine can be of much use to the professed scholar; yet I am willing to flatter myself, it may be of some assistance to two classes of people — to the younger students in divinity, as an *introduction* to the Scriptures — and to those, whose engagements in the world, or necessary business, may prevent their making deeper researches.

Your Lordship knows how many years I have employed upon this work, and how long it hath lain by me; and yet, though I hope I have neither been deficient in reading, in thinking, nor in consulting my friends on the subject, I still bring it forward with apprehension. Nothing is more arduous than to comment on the Scriptures — to *publish* our *own interpretations* of the *word of God*. In many places we *must conjecture*; and there will ever be a variety of opinions. I humbly, however, trust in God, that I have hazarded no conjecture, nor have given any explication of obscure points, inconsistent with the *general sense* of Scripture,

DEDICATION.

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Scripture, which is certainly our best *guide* in all *dubious passages*.

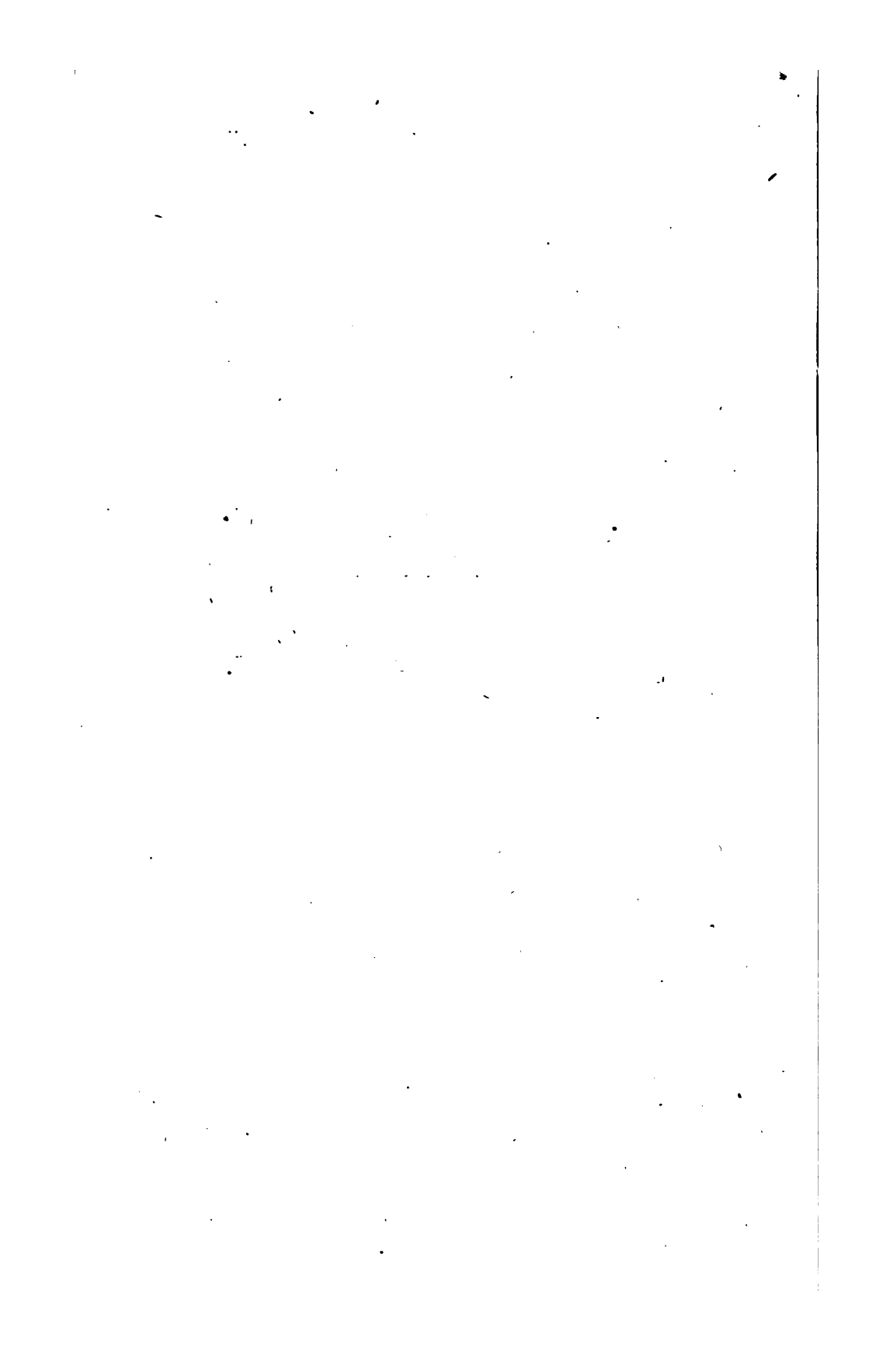
Your Lordship's approbation of my work is one of the best grounds of my hope, that it may in some measure answer the ends I propose. I am, my Lord, with the greatest respect,

Your Lordship's most obedient,

And obliged, humble Servant,

WILLIAM GILPIN.

VICAR'S-HILL,
April 12th, 1790.



GENERAL PREFACE.

AT the time of Jesus Christ's birth, the whole world enjoyed profound peace. The sovereignty of Rome, under Augustus Cæsar, had united, and in a degree civilized, almost all the known nations of the earth*. This, indeed, may be considered as one of those modes of preparation, which God had provided for the reception of the gospel. The several parts of the empire were not only rendered more accessible to it, but were better disposed to receive it. The age was more enlightened; impostures were more easily detected; and the evidences of that religion, which wished for the clearest light, were produced with greater force.

Among other nations, the Jews fell under the government of the Romans. They felt, like the rest of the conquered provinces, the avarice and exactions of pretors and publicans; but, on the whole, they were humanely treated. They were suffered to live under their own laws,

* This was Pliny's opinion. The Roman empire, he tells us, *sparsa congregaret imperia, ritus molliret, &c.* The Roman empire had collected the different governments of the world into one — had softened their savage rites — disseminated a general language to assist the intercourse of mankind — and, in short, had reduced the world to a state of humanity. (Nat. Hist. b. iii. c. 5.) — The conquest of Europe by the Romans, says Dr. Lightfoot, was one of the means, in the Lord's providence, to harrow the world's ruggedness, and to fit it the better for the sowing of the gospel.

with a few restrictions; and their religion was left inviolate. The high-priest exercised his office, and the Sanadrim, in a great degree, their power. It is true, indeed, the emperor sometimes interfered in the promotion of these rulers; yet still their functions went regularly on.

In the mean time, the nation became exceedingly corrupt. The Babylonish captivity, which had been the punishment of their idolatry, had effectually rooted out that crime. But they had adopted others. The spirit of their religion was gone: and though the form of it remained, yet different rites, of Babylonish, Egyptian, Syriac, and Arabic origin, had, in some degree, polluted the purity of the Mosaic ritual. Their morals, too, were much infected. Roman luxuries and Roman vices had found their way into Judea, and had greatly corrupted the people at large; but chiefly in the vicinity of Herod, who was proud of adopting the licentious manners of his conquerors*.

The learning of the Jews, in our Saviour's time, consisted almost entirely in the glosses and interpretations of their rabbies upon the law. This licence in religion was in an earlier period unknown. The old Jewish seer or prophet, who was enabled to work miracles in proof of his divine commission, was the sole interpreter of scripture. He recorded all events, both civil and ecclesiastical. He warned the disobedient of the judgments of God; and reproved both kings and people. Under this high authority, all licentious opinions were restrained; and the Jewish church was unacquainted with schism.

After Malachi, who was the last prophet, and lived about four hundred years before Christ, the Jewish church by degrees divided into different sects. Of these, the most

* See an account of the corrupt state of Judea at this time, in Lardner. Credib. p. i. b. i.

remarkable, both in themselves, and as they so frequently occur in scripture, were the Pharisees and Sadducees.

The hypocritical character of the Pharisee is well known; his solemn deportment; his shew of religion; his pride and contemptuous behaviour; his strictness in trifles; his licence in matters of importance. It was his grand tenet, that tradition was equal to the law; and was given by God to Moses as a supplement to the pentateuch. From this fund, of which he had the sole possession, he imposed various observances on the people, which contributed more than any thing else to destroy the genuine spirit of religion. After our Saviour's time, these traditionary ordinances were collected, and became the *Misna*, the *Gemara*, and the *Talmud*. These books, though very corrupt commentaries on the Jewish law, have, however, been of great use among Christians, as they throw various lights on the customs and proverbial phrases of the Jews, and make the scriptures better understood*.

* Dr. Lightfoot, at the expence of great learning, hath published a large collection of passages from these writings, under the title of *Hebrew and Talmudical Exercitations*; which throw a strong light on our Saviour's invectives against the Pharisees, whose traditions were the ground-work and foundation of all these corruptions. From this work I shall give an instance or two of the absurd glosses of the Talmudists on the Hebrew scriptures. — In speaking of the passage of the Israelites over the river Jordan, they tell us, the waters rose, on that occasion, twelve miles in height. — With regard to Jacob's ladder, we are informed, that the breadth of each step was about thirty thousand miles; and that the bulk of each angel was eight thousand miles in compass. — In proof of the resurrection it is affirmed, that a bone called *Luz*, seated in the back, is the principle of future life; and that it had been demonstrated by Joshua ben Hananiah. That great rabbi took the bone *Luz*, and threw it into water, which did not dissolve it. He threw it into the fire which could not consume it. He brought it to the mill, which could not grind it. He laid it on an anvil, and struck it with a sledge-hammer: the anvil was cleft, and the hammer was broken; but *Luz* remained uninjured.

The Sadducee was a Jewish freethinker. He denied a future state, and *believed neither angel nor spirit*. As he acknowledged, however, the pentateuch, in which he found many narratives of angels, it is difficult to account for his disbelief of these heavenly beings.

In opposition to these latitudinarians, another Jewish sect ran into an opposite extreme. These were the *Essenes*, who carried their religious severities to a great height. As they lived, however, chiefly in the remote parts of Judea, they were little known: their name is not even mentioned in scripture; though it is supposed they are alluded to in some passages; particularly by St. Paul in his epistle to the Colossians *.

Some few, however, there were in the Jewish nation, who, with rational piety, still endeavoured to preserve the purity of scripture; allowing no arbitrary interpretation, and disavowing tradition. Among these, we may suppose, were Simeon, Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and, indeed, all who read the prophetic writings without prejudice, and acknowledged Jesus to be the Messiah.

The great truth of an expected Messiah, was what all sects universally agreed in believing. But while it filled the true interpreter of scripture with holy joy and pious hope, it had a very different effect upon the body of the Jewish nation. Notwithstanding the gentle treatment they had received from the Romans, they bore the yoke with impatience. They were not actuated by a spirit of civil liberty, as other nations commonly were; but by a kind of spiritual pride. They were the descendants of Abraham; and conceiving themselves to be a free people, they never lost the hope, from a full dependence on the predictions of their prophets, of recovering their liberty. It is true, their

* See chap. ii. 23.

prophetic deliverer was strongly marked with characters which could not possibly accord with a temporal prince. He was held out, indeed, as their Redeemer from bondage; but it appeared plain to the attentive interpreter, that this bondage was of a spiritual nature. The nation, however, in general, overlooking the humiliating circumstances of these descriptions, applied only the splendid and triumphal parts to their expected deliverer; and rejected Christ, as he did not answer *their* ideas of a Messiah. At the same time, they were continually breaking out into rebellions, through the deceptions of *false Christs and false prophets*; and thus held out in their belief of prophecies, which never could be fulfilled but in Jesus Christ, a strong proof that he was the real Messiah.

That a general expectation of a Messiah should prevail in Judea, is not surprising, as the prophetic intimations of this great event were so full and so precise. But it is somewhat singular, that the same idea should be found among heathen nations; as it certainly was about the time of our Saviour's appearance. Suetonius* and Tacitus† both speak of a king, that was expected to arise out of Judea at that period. The *Pollio* of Virgil also is a poem of a very peculiar character. It abounds with evangelical traces, through whatever means the poet became possessed of them. But Plato presents us with passages still more surprising. He tells us, *a divine revelation is necessary, to explain the true worship of God—to add authority to moral precepts—to assist our best endeavours in a virtuous course—to fix the future rewards and punishments of virtuous and vicious conduct—and to point out some acceptable expiation for*

* Vit. Vesp. cap. iv.

† Hist. lib. v.

*fin**. In some passages, he comes even yet closer to Christianity. In one place, he introduces Socrates telling Alcibiades, that, *in future time, a divine Person should appear, who, in pure love to mankind, should remove all darkness from his mind; and instruct him how to offer his prayers and praises in the most acceptable way to the divine-Being*†.

There can be little doubt, I think, but that all these intimations from heathen writers must have originated from the Jewish scriptures; which, we have reason to believe, were open to the learned inquiries of those days. The Jewish nation was certainly the great mean, which Providence made use of to prepare the world for the reception of Christianity. The grandeur of their temple—the splendour of their religious rites—and the great renown of their lawgiver—all conspired to draw the attention of learned foreigners; while their travels; their wars, both successful and unsuccessful; their commerce; and above all, their captivities; tended to disseminate, through the means of their scriptures, those high expectations which their prophets had raised.—If we do not suppose all this, we must at least believe these heathen authors saw those great defects in the nature of man, which the gospel was intended to reform. In Plato, particularly, we must acknowledge a noble mind, struggling after the truth of religion; and presenting us with an irrefragable argument, that human reason alone is insufficient to discover it.

But whatever hopes the heathen world might entertain on this head, the birth of Christ completely fulfilled the whole Jewish dispensation. It threw a new splendour on the law, and on the wisdom of the lawgiver. The Levitical

* See a fuller collection of similar passages in Blackwall's Sac. Classics, vol. ii. p. 88.

† Alcib. ii. p. 150.

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ceremonies, in themselves so singular and unintelligible, assumed perspicuity, propriety, and beauty, when it was found, that, as types, they figured out a more explicit revelation of God's will; and that the great scheme of the redemption of man might almost palpably be traced through every one of them. On the other hand, the gospel shone with a much fuller blaze of evidence; when it appeared, that the life, the death, and the office of the Messiah had not only been predicted by the prophets of the Old Testament; but had been portrayed, as it were, and visibly represented, by the rites of the oldest religion on the face of the earth, and the only religion which bore the stamp of a divine institution.

According to the whole tenor of prophecy, Jesus Christ was born in the lowest station, though of the family of David. Bethlehem was the place of his birth; but his chief abode was Nazareth, where he continued in obscurity, till the thirtieth year of his age.——About that time, John the baptist, who had been miraculously born, appeared in the office of forerunner to the Messiah; calling men to repent, and prepare themselves for the gospel.

When John's ministry ceased, that of Jesus commenced. His first business was to choose disciples, to assist him to preach the gospel; to propagate it after his death; and chiefly to be witnesses of his life and resurrection. He chose them from the lowest stations; and had no respect to the abilities of the mind, but to the sincerity of the disposition. He particularly avoided persons endowed with human learning, lest the gospel should be attributed to natural causes*.——Thus accompanied, he preached the

* 1 Cor. i. 26, 27.

gospel through Judea, during the space of three years; and confirmed the truth of it by miracles.

The religion he taught was very plain, however wrought, by the inventions of man, into a complex and mysterious institution. It was founded on the lost condition of mankind, and their utter inability of restoring themselves to God's favour. Faith in him, as their Saviour and lawgiver, was the first condition he required; and that men might not believe without a sufficient ground for their faith, he appealed to the prophecies he fulfilled, the miracles he performed, and the holy doctrines he taught. — As the fruits of faith, he expected men to repent of their sins and lead holy lives; thus restoring themselves, through God's grace, (which was promised to their prayers and endeavours,) to that purity of heart which they had originally lost. These were the plain conditions of the gospel: and on the performance of them, he promised mankind the pardon of their sins through his death, and a restoration to that everlasting happiness, which their first father had forfeited. — He did not, however, openly profess himself the Messiah, even to his own disciples; at least not till towards the conclusion of his ministry. Their prejudices were yet too strong to bear the truth. The idea of a *crucified Redeemer* was still beyond their conception. He expressed himself, therefore, indirectly on this head; but yet with such perspicuity, that, after his resurrection and ascension, his disciples, remembering what he had said, received it as full conviction. — On many occasions, also, he used the parabolic manner of teaching; which was, indeed, the common vehicle of knowledge in the east. The talmudical writings are full of it. The *precepts* of the gospel our Lord renders sufficiently plain; though he sometimes enforces *them* by a parable. But the chief use he makes of this mode

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mode of instruction, is in describing the future progress of his kingdom, and its reception in the world. These notices the ill-disposed could not misapply; while the believer, afterwards seeing them completely fulfilled, (as parables of this kind have a prophetic cast,) was confirmed in his faith.

The preaching and miracles of Jesus had their due effect on the simplicity of the common people, who attended him in great numbers; though many of them probably under the expectation of a temporal deliverance; which he always endeavoured, however, to repress. The Jewish rulers, in the mean time, could not bear the idea of a religion, which was intended to supersede the Levitical law, and to introduce all the nations of the earth to the same degree of favour with God, which the Jews had arrogantly appropriated to themselves. But the character of Jesus was so popular, that his enemies were obliged to act with great caution. Having at length, however, obtained a favourable opportunity of seizing him privately, through the treachery of one of his disciples, they accused him to the Roman governor, and had influence enough to procure his condemnation. On the third day after his death, he arose from the dead, and appeared to many people. We have an account of his appearing to more than *five hundred persons at one time**. But his apostles were the only persons whom he appointed as his *chosen witnesses*†, to attest and record this great truth to the world. He continued with his disciples on earth only a short time after his resurrection, and then ascended finally into heaven.

* 1 Cor. xv. 6.

† Acts, x. 41.

After

After these great events, the disciples, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, with which they were powerfully endowed, spread the gospel through various parts of the world. It had hitherto been confined to Judea: but the prophecies which foretold the call of the Gentiles, began now to be fulfilled.

The next step they took, was to provide for the future state of the church, by writing faithful narratives of the life and doctrines of their Master. The doctrines are not drawn out in systematic form, but blended with the life of their divine Author; and calculated, not so much to exercise the understanding, as to impress the heart. The narratives are all artless in the greatest degree. No means are used, in any shape, to prejudice or fascinate the reader. Jesus is nowhere praised, nor his enemies aspersed; nor the least attempt made to prove by argument the truth of any thing that is said. The plain narrative, in its simplest form, is laid before those, who, living at the time, had an opportunity to know the truth, and were left to make their own comments upon it, and hand down their testimony to others. No internal evidence, I think, can have more weight.

The epistles took their origin from the errors of the times. While the Jewish church was governed by prophets, who had the whole under their eye, licentious opinions, as we observed, were easily restrained. But this order could not subsist in the Christian church, which was widely dispersed. It pleased the Divine Providence, therefore, to leave it, after its first establishment, to its own native force and evidence. Well disposed persons had all the means they could desire of being acquainted with the truth: but it was soon found that ill-disposed persons began to mix their prejudices and private views with the simplicity and purity of the gospel. We meet with many traces of this

this undue mixture even in apostolical times. The opinions of Simon Magus—of the Nicolaitans—of Hymeneus and Philetus, were all of this kind. But the wrong opinions, which were the most prevalent in the early church, were those of Judaizing Christians. A numerous body of these, in all parts, being still zealous for the Levitical law, blended their Jewish ideas with Christianity; placing circumcision on the same footing with faith in Christ and good works.

To obviate these and other licentious opinions, the apostles, especially St. Paul, wrote their several epistles. The primary occasion, it is true, of most of these epistles, was to oppose the erroneous opinions which prevailed in the different churches to which they were written: but still they were intended to be of use to future Christians, by completing their ideas of Christianity. And, indeed, many of the erroneous opinions of later times are very similar to those of ancient date.

The style of these sacred writings is, in general, plain and unadorned. The narratives, particularly, are drawn up with wonderful simplicity. The same artless character which marks the lives of the writers, distinguishes also their writings. Numerous instances, indeed, we find of strong figurative expressions: but these are merely the idioms of eastern phraseology. In point of composition, I think, it must be owned, these writings are by no means elegant models, according to the rules of criticism now established; nor equal, in this respect, to many works, both historical and philosophical, which have been handed down to us from antiquity.

Some learned writers* have taken great pains to evince their elegance and classical parity. But I think none have

* See particularly Blackwall in his Dissert. on the Sac. Claf.

gone much farther than to shew, that a few words and phrases, which have been esteemed barbarous in the New Testament, may be found in good writers. They have not entered critically into the *composition* of these writings, which on this plan ought chiefly to have been laboured; both as it is the most essential part of elegant writing, and as the sacred writers appear to have paid so little attention to it. * Indeed they scarcely spoke with ordinary propriety; certainly not with what is called the purity and elegance of their tongue*.

But the credit of these divine books does not in any respect depend on inquiries of this kind, which indeed seem rather debasing. It appears equally absurd to suppose, either that the Holy Spirit attended to the trifling forms and critical rules of human composition; or that the writers, if we may suppose them left to themselves in this matter, had an eye to the elegance of their works. How would every serious man think they had mistaken the point, if they had attended to all the littlenesses of fine writing, while they were engaged in the great work of publishing salvation to mankind? And yet Dr. Middleton, with a strange hardness of criticism, thinks their want of elegance is an argument of their want of inspiration.

Through all they spoke a noble plainness ran:
Rhetoric is *artifice*; the work of man;
And tricks, and turns, that fancy may devise,
Are far too mean for Him that rules the skies †.

In the manner, therefore, of *cloathing their thoughts*, the sacred writers seem to have been left entirely to themselves; and to have written with that simplicity which men, big

* See Hurd's Sermons, vol. iii. ser. 7.

† Cowper.
with

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with their subject, but unversed in letters, might be supposed to write. Elegant writing is matter of taste. It is directed to the imagination. Their writings are directed to the heart.

To put this matter, however, out of all dispute, the apostles themselves repudiated every idea of elegance and refinement of style. Their constant language is, "We come not with the excellency of speech; or of wisdom. We determine not to know any thing among you but Jesus Christ, and him crucified. Our speech and our preaching is not with the enticing words of man's wisdom: but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."—Here is a reason given to shew even the impropriety of any attention to these matters.

In St. Paul's writings, indeed, we are sometimes pleased with the arrangement of his subject, as well as his manner of treating it; and though they are constructed in a peculiar manner, figurative, vehement, desultory, and by no means agreeable to the accurate forms of modern composition; yet the author always appears the man of letters, and writes like one. His companion also, St. Luke, is supposed to have had a liberal education; the effect of which we discover in his writings. An elegant, pleasing simplicity is their characteristic. But each of these modes of writing was the *natural* vehicle of the writer's thoughts. They lay no stress on any of these human accomplishments. St. Paul, we have seen, utterly rejects them. In works therefore which have superior claims to our regard, they are of no consequence. Elegance would be no addition to their value; and the want of it therefore can be no detraction from their merit.

It will readily be supposed, that writings of such celebrity as these gospels and epistles, would give birth to

many spurious compositions in imitation of them. In fact, there were many such. Gospels and epistles were written; some with good designs, others with bad; some in the true spirit of Christianity, others in a legendary and fabulous strain. Of these spurious productions we have many traces in antiquity. As they multiplied, it became necessary to distinguish them from such as were of genuine origin. At what time the canon of the Holy Scriptures was settled cannot easily be ascertained; certainly long before it was recognised, about the year 365, by the council of Laodicea. It is the most general opinion, however, that it was settled nearly in the form in which we now have it, before the middle of the second century; for in that early period, we have reason to believe, it was received in all Christian churches as a confirmed rule of faith and manners.

In this selection nothing was allowed but what was known (and then it might be well known) to be derived from apostolic times. Though many of these spurious writings were intrinsically good, yet, as they could not bring the testimony of antiquity, they were rejected. The epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, for instance, was in great esteem, and long read publicly in churches; but it could never get admission into the sacred canon. Eusebius expressly affirms, that the three first gospels were authorised by St. John, who lived to an extreme old age; and that he added his own as a supplement. This, however, does not seem entirely supported by *internal evidence*. That the same apostle collected the other books of the sacred canon, is matter also of *supposition*: indeed it is most probable, that as it was well known from the earliest ages which of these sacred books were authentic, no *formal selection* was necessary.

Of the authenticity therefore of these books, the candid inquirer can entertain no doubt. Every one knows how
difficult

difficult it is to ascribe the works of an author, whose name they bear, to any other person. No combination of men could ever give the works of Livy to Tacitus, or of Tacitus to Livy. But with regard to the authenticity of the scriptures, we argue on still firmer ground. They have been regularly traced. Dr. Lardner, in his *Credibility of the Gospel History*, hath adduced a series of quotations from the several books of the New Testament, in writings still existing, even as far as to the very times of the apostles; which is, I think, a proof of the authenticity of scripture, short only of absolute demonstration.

True it is, that the epistle to the Hebrews—the epistle of James—the second epistle of Peter—the two last of John—the epistle of Jude—and the Revelations, were all received later into the sacred canon than the other books of scripture.* The case was, most of those writings were addressed to Christian churches in *general*; which sometimes might occasion a less certain proof of their authenticity, as they were not delegated to the care of any particular body of Christians. However, as all these writings were soon received, and universally acknowledged; we should consider this caution as a convincing argument in their favour.

About the dates* of many of these sacred writings there are different opinions still among learned men: but there are
very

* The reader may here see two chronological tables of the epistles, widely different from each other; and yet both supported by men of distinguished reputation.

Chronological order of the Epistles by Michaelis.

	A. D.
I. Peter from Jerusalem	49
Gal. Thessalonica	51
I. Theff. Corinth	54
II. Theff.	

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very few circumstances in which the settlement of a date is of any consequence: in general it may rather be considered as a matter of curiosity.

		A. D.
II. Theff. from	Corinth	52
I. Corinth.	Ephesus	57
II. Corinth.	Macedonia	58
I. Tim.	Corinth.	58
Romans	Corinth.	end of 58
James		61
Philemon	Rome	62
Colossians		
Ephesians		
Philippians		
Hebrews.	Rome	63
Titus	Nicopolis	—
II. Peter		67
Jude		—
II. Tim.	Rome	67
Three Epistles of	John	70
Revelations	Patmos	96

Chronological order of the Epistles by Dr. Lardner.

		A. D.
I. Theff. from	Corinth	52
II. Theff.	Corinth	52
Galat.	Corinth, or } end of 52	
	Ephesus } or begin. of 53	
I. Corinth.	Ephesus	beg. of 53
I. Tim.	Macedonia	56
Titus	Macedonia, or near it	56
II. Corinth.	Macedonia	end of 57
Romans	Corinth	beg. of 58
Ephesians	Rome	beg. of 61
II. Tim.	Rome	61
James	Judea	61 or 62
Philip.	Rome	end of 62
Colos.	Rome	end of 62
Philemon	Rome	end of 62
Hebrews	Rome or Italy	beg. of 63
I. Peter	Rome	64
II. Peter	Rome	64
Jude		64—65
I. John	Ephesus	about 80
II. John	Ephesus	between 80 and 90
III. John	Ephesus	between 80 and 90
Revelations	Patmos, or Ephesus	95 or 96

In a book, written, as the Holy Scriptures were, under the direction of God—on a subject of such importance—and addressed to all mankind, one should not reasonably expect to find any difficulties. Nor is it probable there were any on its first publication: and indeed in all *material points* the same perspicuity still exists. It is plain to every one, who reads it seriously, that it is an address to the heart—that it is meant to call the minds of men from the world—to establish the belief of a future state; and to prepare mankind for it by purified affections.

But though the great *end and intention* of it be perfectly plain and perspicuous, yet in matters of *less moment* a variety of causes have concurred to introduce obscurity. Nor could it have been otherwise without the interposition of a standing miracle.

In the first place, mistakes in transcribing have had this effect. The collations of MSS. shew the variations among them. We may reasonably suppose, there hath not existed one MS. perfectly correct; and may as reasonably conclude, that many mistakes have crept into the Greek text which have never yet been completely rectified. A very candid expositor, speaking of some of the difficulties of the New Testament, says, *he knows not how to account for them but by supposing, that here and there our received reading hath varied from the original* *.

Translations also have occasioned obscurity. Ours is confessedly a good one. But in the best translations many words and expressions must lose their force. The idiom of a language so different from our own, will certainly, without care, create difficulty. When a translator, instead of giving what is acknowledged on all sides to be the un-

* Doddridge's pref. to the 3d vol. of his Fam. Expos.

doubted sense, thinks himself obliged to give the *literal words*, he often *misleads* his reader. Our translation, for instance, makes our Saviour say, *I thank thee, O Father, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes*; whereas he certainly does not mean to thank God for hiding them from the wise and prudent, but for making them plain to the unlearned: for so the Jewish idiom imports; and the expression, no doubt, should be translated to imply that meaning. Thus, again, *idle words* should be translated *wicked words*; and the *unprofitable servant*, a *guilty one*. Indeed in some passages our translation hath taken this liberty. The *steward of unrighteousness*, and the *judge of unrighteousness*, are well translated the *unjust steward*, and the *unjust judge*. We regret that the same liberty hath not more frequently prevailed.

Proverbial modes of expression—frequent allusions to the ceremonies of the Mosaic law—together with the free and bold use of figurative language (though clearly understood when the scriptures were written) all tend, at this late day, to occasion obscurity.

Particles also, wrongly translated, which frequently occur, tend greatly to obscure the sacred text. It is not an easy matter to give particles their proper force; especially as they were considered (at least before criticism began to form its canons) as the most trivial parts of a discourse; whereas they are now justly acknowledged to be among the most important; inasmuch as they form that connection between the divisions of a sentence on which its sense so greatly depends. It may be added also, that there are many particles which, in our version, are rendered literally; though in the original they are mere *expletives*, and should not have been rendered at all.

The manners and customs also of so remote an age and country introduce great confusion among *common readers*,
who

who cannot easily reconcile themselves to many things which appear to them absurd. It is difficult for them to conceive, how new wine should burst old bottles; or how a man can be taken in a bed to the top of a house, and let down with cords.—Under this head may be considered several of our Saviour's discourses to the Jews; which appear odd and peculiar when compared with any modern modes of expression; but were, at the time when spoken, easy and familiar. This point, I think, deserves great attention: and particularly when we read the writings of St. John. *In interpreting very many phrases of the New Testament, says Dr. Lightfoot, it is not so much worth what we think of them from notions of our own, as in what sense these things were understood by the hearer.**

Even our being accustomed to read the scriptures from our infancy, may itself, without care, occasion and confirm our ignorance. What we are well acquainted with seems easy; and passages which, in fact, we do not understand, may often appear intelligible, merely because they are familiar.

But perhaps nothing has contributed so much to introduce obscurity into the sacred text, as the barbarous method of dividing it into chapters and verses. The ancient manuscripts of the New Testament were, in general, without pointing; paragraph, or any other division of sentences; often without any division of words†. A reader was then obliged to attend closely to the meaning and connection of his author, in order to gather up the sense. This was, however, too hard upon him: it made reading

* See Lightfoot's *Hebr. and Talmud. Exercitationes*, vol. ii. p. 158.

† This may be seen in the Alexandrine MS. which was given to Charles I. by the patriarch of Constantinople; and of which a beautiful fac. simile hath lately been printed.

painful, and was attended—often with much obscurity. Chapters, sections, paragraphs, and points, have certainly their use. *Qui benè distinguit, benè docet.*

The first division, which the several books of the New Testament underwent, was into chapters or portions for lessons in churches. This, if properly done, had been judicious. It was certainly necessary. Some division of this kind was made as early as the fourth century. Afterwards Robert Stephens, following something of the kind that had been introduced by Rabbi Nathan into the Hebrew scriptures, divided several editions, which he printed of the New Testament, into verses. I am not certainly informed whether he broke the text in any of these editions into versicular paragraphs, as our testaments are now printed; or whether he only added the verses as marginal references, of which cardinal Hugo, who composed the first concordance, had set him an example. In *many* of his editions it is certain he added the verses only in the margin*: and so far they are highly useful. But whoever mangled the text by these versicular divisions, has, in my opinion, done the scriptures great injury. Thus broken and frittered into portions, independent of all sense and connection, they are changed from a continued narrative or argument; into a number of aphorisms: and readers, instead of receiving their religion from the general scope of the gospel, are too much led to receive it from detached sentences. An

* A learned friend informs me, that among the editions of the New Testament by Stephens, (of which there are several,) the best are commonly called *Omirificams*, from an advertisement prefixed, beginning with *O mirificam regis clementiam*. Of these editions the most correct is called the *pulres* edition, from having in the advertisement, the word *pulres* misprinted for *plures*; which is said (though not truly) to be the only erratum in the book. This edition, he believes, was printed late in Stephens's life; and neither in this, nor in any of the *Omirificams*, is the text broken.

opinion is proved by quoting a text: and what may not be so proved? Many unscriptural opinions, no doubt, have taken their rise from this practice. For it is certainly much easier to prove a doctrine by half a dozen texts, which make a good *verbal proof*, than by the context, the scope of the argument, and the tenor of the gospel. Shakespear had divinity enough to see the absurdity of such proof:

——— In religion,
What damned error, but some sober brow
Will bless it; and approve it with a text?

If a few divisions only were used, of a greater or shorter length, to shew what passages have a closer or more remote connection with each other, (as books of all kinds, except the Bible, are divided,) what a different appearance would our English Testament assume!

In the mean time, it is the commentator's business to dispel the obscurity arising from all these causes. I know it is a popular argument, among young students, to depreciate the labours of commentators. "They perplex" and confound a reader: the naked text is studied more "advantageously without them."——And, no doubt, the many volumes of commentators are formidable, though we confine ourselves to the best.——Nobody, I apprehend, has contributed more to bring commentators into disrepute than Mr. Locke. He condemns them all in a body; which is not perhaps quite fair, as he is a commentator himself. The learning and abilities of this great man will be respected by every scholar and every Christian: and the method he prescribes of reading St. Paul's epistles *frequently over*, to get hold of the scope of the writer, must certainly be acknowledged rational and just. But still, perhaps, if Mr. Locke himself had not trusted to his own reason quite so much, but had ventured a little more to look into com-

mentators, and sift their observations with that penetration of which he was master, he might perhaps have avoided some mistakes that are laid to his charge; and might, on the whole, have made a better work.

But on a supposition that Mr. Locke's abilities made a commentator's assistance unnecessary, yet every student must not consider himself in the same light. Many helps may be necessary to him, which were not so to Mr. Locke. The commentator's aid, in all places at least which he does not *clearly understand*, will be of great use to him; and he will often have reason to admire the pains they have taken to seek out the force of words and figurative expressions—to explain Jewish customs and ceremonies—to collate one part of Scripture with another—to inquire into the meaning of idioms and proverbial modes of speaking—to explain geographical and chronological difficulties—and, in short, to render clear whatever hath gathered obscurity through a course of time. And can any young student suppose, either, that these inquiries do not tend greatly to elucidate the scriptures?—Or that his own endeavours can be equal to them? Or indeed, that the endeavours of any single person can attain a degree of knowledge which must arise from the labours of one improving on the labours of another?

No doubt, as the scriptures have been more commented on than any other books—and as people of all professions and opinions, and under prejudices of every kind, have laboured in this work, there will of course be many things said on the subject which had better been unsaid. Nay, even the best commentators may have their particular opinions, which may often mislead their interpretations. Let the student, therefore, with his best judgment, endeavour to find out where the commentator trifles—where he refines—or, above all things, where he deviates from common sense; which

which should always guide our interpretations of scripture. But let him well examine the numberless lights which their united labours have thrown upon the sacred text, before he venture to condemn them *in the gross*. The scriptures are perhaps better understood now, through the means of able commentators, than they have ever been since the time of their first publication.

The following work is certainly not intended as a *substitute* to the labours of the many learned men who have commented on the scriptures; but rather as an *introduction* to them. It is meant to give, in a short compass, a *general idea* of what the commentator discusses *at large*. In their works we have the *parts* often ably explained; but rarely a connected view of the *whole*. In the following work this plan hath been reversed. The general sense and connection of the *whole* hath been attended to, without regarding minutely the critical examination of *parts*: so that the reader may pursue the narrative or argument without interruption. This endeavour to place the *leading subject* in the fairest point of light, hath sometimes made me perhaps more concise than I should otherwise have chosen to be. I wished to avoid what I thought the greatest fault of paraphrasts, that of saying too much. Many parts of scripture require no explanation: and a difficult passage is not always difficult because it is concise. An explanation perhaps need employ no more words than a difficulty. It appeared to me, in short, a useful mode of commenting, to give just the *leading sense*, which is sometimes lost, or however injured, in a *multiplicity of words*: while I trust I have left nothing unsaid, except in critical matters, which will not easily strike an observant reader on looking into the original.—I have sometimes also abridged, where a sentiment or fact is drawn out, according to the Jewish idiom,

into repetition; or where a doctrine relates to some ancient error, and is less interesting at this time. But when I overrun a real difficulty, the reader will generally find an account of it in the notes; unless it relate to some nicety of verbal criticism, which I leave to works more professedly written on those subjects. I refer however to each verse in the margin, that the reader may, with ease, apply elsewhere for satisfaction, when he does not find it here. A clear, connected discourse, without pausing long at obstacles, hath been chiefly aimed at, which may itself lessen many difficulties; and by throwing a *general* light over the *whole*, make even the *parts* more intelligible. "I am more and more convinced (says a pious and able expositor) that the vulgar sense of the New Testament, that is, the sense in which an honest man of plain sense would take it on his first reading it, is almost every where the true general sense of any passage: though an acquaintance with language and antiquity, with an attentive meditation on the text and context, may illustrate the spirit and energy of a multitude of places *."

Upon the whole, in this exposition I have endeavoured, as nearly as I can, to give the scriptures in *such a dress*, as I humbly (very humbly) suppose they might have appeared in, if they had been *written originally in English*, and accommodated to the *customs, idioms, and modes of phraseology now in use*; and by giving them this modern cast, I have attempted to make the *sense of them* as familiar to our ears as it was to those of the *early Christians*. One great point I have laboured, is to make the connection between the several parts of a discourse as easy as I can. The Jewish writers, among whom composition was not cultivated as a science, were little attentive to this matter.

* Doddr. Fam. Expos. vol. ii. p. 29.

A train of ideas, no doubt, flowed regularly in their minds; but it is not always obvious to a modern ear which is used to a more artificial combination. In the writings of St. Paul this abruptness is particularly remarkable. On this point I have taken all the pains I could, and have used the best helps I could find, to shew the connection.

Some writers have undertaken a task, which (I speak with diffidence) appears equally arduous and unnecessary—that of *harmonizing* the scriptures, by bringing them into agreement in every *minute particular*. That there exists the most harmonious agreement among the evangelical writers in all the *doctrines of religion*, and in all the circumstances of any consequence in the *history*, every body, who reads the scriptures *candidly*, must acknowledge. But that there are many little contrarieties in dates and trifling circumstances, cannot well, I think, be denied. “Indeed, if no *transposition* be allowed, (says a very candid harmonizer *,) “it is absolutely impossible, in many passages of gospel-history, to make any consistent harmony of the evangelists at all; as every attentive reader must often have observed.” I am clearly of his opinion. And if it be necessary to allow *transposition* in the evangelists; by a parity of reason, other little *contrarieties* may be allowed also. In fact, the *unimportant detail* of an action seems below their notice.

I do not mean to insinuate that every thing in the gospels, which has the appearance of a contradiction, is really such; for many of these seeming contradictions have been happily reconciled. Nor do I mean to insinuate that none of them are worth the attention of the learned; for some of them certainly affect the leading facts of the

* Fam. Expos. vol. ii. p. 616.

history, and deserve notice. All I mean is, that *whole* circumstances (evidently, in themselves and in their connection, *unimportant*) cannot easily be brought to slide into each other, it is better to leave them, as of no moment, than to endeavour to draw them together by forced and unnatural suppositions. Circumstances, indeed, of this kind appear so far from injuring the authenticity of these sacred books, that they seem to add a beautiful simplicity to them; and even to give a force to their evidence, which it would not have had if it had tallied in the minutest particulars.

See how this matter stands in common life. Four witnesses come forward to give their evidence on a fact which had happened about thirty or forty years before. This is the exact state of the evangelical evidence. In all the great leading circumstances, which tend to prove the only points on which the question turns, they are perfectly agreed. In these their memory serves them. They are matters of moment, and have made an impression. In the mean time, with regard to other particulars, they vary: but they are such particulars as no way affect the *main question*; and such as, it is evident, the memory of four people cannot equally nor exactly retain through so long a period.—But is not this all the evidence you would desire? Does human testimony (which is founded on memory) reach farther? And, indeed, does not such evidence usually appear *even stronger*, than when there is a *perfect agreement in every particular*? Is not such trivial exactness the characteristic rather of *collusive* than of *honest* testimony? Indeed, when the fact is *recent*, you expect *more exactness* in the evidence: but I am speaking here only of such evidence as the apostolic evidence was, when the facts testified had happened many years before the testimony was given. A captious lawyer,
indeed,

indeed, might endeavour to take the advantage of these variations; but certainly no sincere inquirer after truth would attempt it.

But the evangelic testimony, you say, is of a different kind. It is not founded on *memory*, but on *inspiration*; and, therefore, notwithstanding any lapse of time, should be exact in every particular.

No doubt, it would, if that were the case. But who can say how far inspiration extends? The evangelic writers themselves acknowledge they often speak on *human authority*. St. Luke, in the beginning of his gospel, expressly says, he wrote such things as had been *delivered to him by eye-witnesses*. If he had had them from *inspiration*, it was surely absurd to appeal to a *weaker* testimony, when he had a *stronger*. St. Paul also sometimes speaks with *uncertainty*: as when he mentions those persons whom he had baptized, he adds, *I know not whether I baptized any other**. And speaking of the persecution he expected to find at Jerusalem; *Behold*, says he, *I go bound in the Spirit, NOT KNOWING the things that shall befall me*. Sometimes, again, he makes a plain distinction between what he says as an *inspired apostle*, and what he says merely as a *man*. Of this we have several instances in the seventh chapter of the first of Corinthians†. He had a contest also with St. Peter about a point in religion, though no very interesting one. Both, however, could not be right; and yet, if inspiration had extended universally, we might have expected perfect unanimity.

As the apostolic writers themselves lay no claim to this extent of inspiration, so neither can it be proved, I think, from any part of scripture. We are told, indeed, that the

* 1 Cor. i. 16.

† See the 6th, 10th, 25th, and 40th verses.

apostles should be *led into all the truth*; and that *the Spirit should bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever Jesus had said unto them*. But neither of these expressions, nor any other, that I recollect, can fairly be interpreted to mean more, than that the apostles should be restrained by the Holy Spirit from error, and led into the remembrance of all the truths which their Master had taught them, *as far as religion was concerned*. Divine truth was the only object that was aimed at. In whatever concerned this, their minds, no doubt, were spiritually illumined. But in other matters, (which were unimportant,) and, indeed, in all *matters of fact*, which fell under their own eyes, or which they received from just information, their testimony was only the testimony of honest men. And in giving such testimony, I see not why their evidence might not be as fallible in trifling circumstances, (*secured, at the same time, from errors of importance,*) as human evidence commonly is at such a distance of time.

—What is it, for instance, to the truth of religion, whether our Saviour, on crossing the lake of Gennesaret, met one demoniac or two? Or whether he met them in the country of the Gaderenes or of the Gergesenes; which two people were contiguous? The attestation to the truth of the gospel by a miracle, which is the great leading fact, and all that is necessary, is the same in all these cases.—What again signifies it to the truth of religion, whether that noble discourse which our Saviour gave the people, and which is commonly called the *sermon on the mount*, were really spoken on a *mount* or on a *plain*? Our Saviour spoke many discourses, no doubt, in both situations; and it might easily escape the narrator's memory, in which of them this particular discourse was spoken. If St. Matthew and St. Luke had written in concert, they would have taken care, no doubt, to agree in

in this particular. As they did not write in concert, there happens to be a trifling difference. But is the *main question* affected by it? Is there any difference in the *doctrine* which the two evangelists delivered from their Master's mouth? This is all that is material; and all that the Holy Spirit, we may suppose, saw necessary to *bring to their remembrance*.

Indeed, if the evidence of the evangelists had been throughout miraculous and inspired, why did their blessed Master carry them constantly with him as *witneses* of what they heard? He tells us the reason was, that *what they heard in the ear*, (as if hearing was the chief inlet of instruction,) *they might preach from the house-tops*. The great Author of nature never admits a miracle, where the ordinary course of providence is sufficient: and in recording a *plain fact*, a miraculous intervention seems *unnecessary*.

The Bishop of Osfory, in his preface to his harmony, observes, that *a harmony by a juxtaposition of parallel passages, is often the best commentary*. It certainly is; and nobody can read the evangelists attentively without comparing parallel passages. But the observation cannot hold with regard to those passages which are *marked with uncertainty*; and about which *harmonizers themselves are at variance*. *The evangelists, treating of the same subject*, says the bishop, quoting Mr. Locke, *do give great light to one another; and I think, may, with the greatest advantage, be read in harmony*. True: but we cannot suppose that Mr. Locke means here by *harmony*, every *arbitrary supposition* that may be called so. He expressly says, he speaks only of the evangelists, *when treating of the same subject*. When it is uncertain, whether they *do treat of the same subject*, or *not* — when Le Clerk, for instance, thinks in one way; Dr. Doddridge in another; Dr. Macknight,

or

or some other harmonist, in a third ; and so on ; we may be entertained with *ingenious conjectures* ; but still we get no ground—the harmony rests on human authority ; and we are still left in a field of uncertainty.—It appears, therefore, we should only contend for the harmony of the gospels, when that harmony is *generally acknowledged*, and when the evangelists obviously, as Mr. Locke phrases it, *treat of the same subject*. When we lay together, for instance, the several circumstances of our Saviour's birth, of his crucifixion, or of any other particular, related by different evangelists, as *undeniably the same*, we may obtain a clearer view of it than we could have had from any single evangelist : and in this light, the Bishop of Osfory's harmony and others have great use. But where *conjecture* begins, harmony undoubtedly ends.

It seems, therefore, a part of religious wisdom to be cautious on this head. By laying the force of evangelical evidence too strongly, as is often the case, on *its exact concurrence in every particular*, the unsteady reader is led to suppose, that its truth, in a great degree, depends on this concurrence ; and when he sees it, as he often must see it, awkwardly supported, he may be apt to doubt the whole truth of the gospel, from the production of this feeble mode of evidence. "The authority of the scriptures" (as the sagacious Erasmus observed long ago) "would not be invalidated, though small inaccuracies should be found in them, in matters of little or no consequence ; as it is by no means clear, how far divine inspiration extended*." Yet I should not wish this argument to be carried farther than it will fairly go. Coincidences have been found, in many passages, by patient investigators, which were not

* Epist. 376.

before thought of; and it is possible, that MSS. yet undiscovered, may throw new lights on others. All I contend for is, that an exact coincidence, in *many cases*, cannot be made out; and that the divine authority or inspiration of the holy scriptures is safe, notwithstanding these little variations in unimportant points.

I am fearful, however, of blaming those commentators who, on a different plan, have chosen to blend all the evangelists together, and exhibit one narrative from four. But though I dare not venture to blame *them*, I have taken a contrary method *myself*. My reasons are these:

In the first place, by explaining the evangelists *separately*, in the order in which we have them, the difficulties of each may the more easily be examined. When the four gospels are melted together, the *parts* of *each* are lost; and the reader is less able to look for explanations, which more readily unfold themselves when the books are turned over in their natural order. He is less able also to understand a difficulty when he meets it out of its proper place: he wants the context to guide his interpretations, and must trust more to the harmonizer's judgment.

Secondly, by explaining the four evangelists *separately*, the *parts* are not only preserved more distinct, but the *whole* is more uniform. It seems difficult to blend the four gospels into *one well-arranged* narrative. It is *impossible*, without many *harsh suppositions*. St. Luke, for instance, gives us many parables and historical passages, of which none of the other evangelists take notice; and yet St. Luke gives us no circumstances to establish their chronological order. How, and where are they to be introduced? We may call it *harmonizing*, if we please, when we blend them with the other evangelists: but it is certainly a very forced and arbitrary mode of connecting.

Several

Several parallel passages also agree so ill, that we must necessarily suppose some little variation, or we must suppose them separate narratives. Indeed it is common among harmonizers, when they find two passages *on the whole* consenting, but at variance *in some circumstances*, to consider them as two actions. This is an easy way, it is true, of getting rid of a difficulty; but it is always arbitrary, and often awkward. The account, for instance, which the four evangelists * give of Simon's supper are so different, that all of them cannot well be interwoven together: and yet, if we conceive them with the generality of harmonizers to be different events, it is somewhat difficult to suppose so many circumstances should agree. Jesus was invited twice to supper by two different people of the name of Simon—at each supper a woman came in with an alabaster box of precious ointment—she twice anointed him—the same persons were present on both occasions—and some of the very same observations were made.

Lastly, the evangelical proof appears with *more force* when four witnesses come forward, and each separately gives his evidence, (evidence given on record, at different places, and in different times) without the least *material* variation. We have hence certainly that strong, that irresistible proof, which no *blended narrative*, or *systemized testimony* can give.

I shall just add to this preface a few explanations of persons and things, which occur frequently in scripture.

The *Samaritans* were originally heathen, settled by the King of Assyria, after the captivity, in the Israelitish

* Matt. xxvi. 6. — Mark xiv. 3. — Luke vii. 36. — John xii. 1.
— See a note at the end of Luke vii.

cities. Many of the ten tribes, afterwards returning, incorporated with them in their old habitations: and thus, by degrees, the Samaritans became a body of spurious Jews. They received the pentateuch: but there was still a great mixture of heathenism, in their religion; and the native Jews entertained an unbounded hatred towards them.

A *Scribe* was a general name, among the Jews, for a *public teacher*; though he is sometimes also known in scripture by the name of a *lawyer*. St. Luke particularly makes a distinction between them, calling the former γραμματεὺς, and the latter νομικός, or νομοδιδασκαλός. The Scribes, in general, were of the sect of the Pharisees: and conversant, like them, in traditions. On our Saviour's appearance in public, they began to lose their influence with the people, who observed, that Jesus taught them *as one having authority, and not as the Scribes*.

The *Herodians* seem to have been rather a political than a religious sect. They were the espousers of Herod's maxims; and under his influence supported the Roman power. In religious principles, it is supposed they were chiefly Sadducees*.

Of the Jewish festivals, the most distinguished was the *Passover*, which lasted seven days. It was instituted in commemoration of the angel's *passing over* the houses of the Israelites, when the first-born of the Egyptians were slain. It is called also in scripture the feast of *unleavened bread*.

The next great festival was the *Pentecost*, which lasted only one day; taking its name from being celebrated fifty days after the Passover. It was instituted in remembrance of the giving of the law. We sometimes also find

* Compare Matt. xvi. 6. with Mark viii. 15.

this festival called the *feast of harvest*, from the season when it was celebrated; and also the *feast of weeks*, from its being numbered by weeks after the passover.

The third great festival was the *feast of Tabernacles*, which lasted seven days, and was observed in the time of vintage. It was the annual record of that mode of dwelling which the children of Israel had used in travelling through the wilderness; and preserved the remembrance of the great deliverances they experienced at that time. — All these great festivals were appointed by the law to be celebrated at Jerusalem, whither the whole nation was enjoined to repair.

Every seventh day was a *sabbath*: every seventh year a *sabbatical year*; and every fiftieth year a *Jubilee*. — The Jews also observed the feast of the *New moon*, which was celebrated on the first new-moon of the year. This feast was called also the *feast of Trumpets*, from the mode of its being proclaimed. — We read also of two other feasts among the Jews, though both of human institution; the *feast of Purim*, and the *feast of the Dedication*. The former was instituted in remembrance of the delivery of the people by Esther; the latter was appointed by Judas Maccabeus in honour of cleansing the temple after the pollutions of Antiochus.

Several fasts also were observed among the Jews, both annually and on particular occasions: but none of them were of divine institution, except the *great day of atonement*, which was observed between the feasts of Pentecost and Tabernacles. On that day the high-priest entered the Holy of Holies, to make expiation for his own sins and the sins of the people: and on that day also the ceremony of the azazel, or scape-goat, was performed.

The Jewish division of time also is often mentioned in scripture: — The day was divided into four parts.

The

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The first part, beginning at six, ended at nine; which being a space of three hours, nine o'clock was called the third hour. The second part beginning at nine, ended at twelve, which was called the sixth hour. The third part, beginning at twelve, ended at three, which was called the ninth hour; and the fourth part, beginning at three ended at six, which of course became the twelfth hour. — The night was divided into four watches; the evening-watch, the middle-watch, the cock-crowing, and the morning-watch.

VICAR'S HILL,
April, 1790.

END OF THE GENERAL PREFACE.

THE
L I F E
OF
J E S U S C H R I S T,
DRAWN FROM THE
PROPHECIES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

THE life of Christ, as recorded by the evangelists, cannot, I think, be introduced better than by the same life, as we have it delineated in the Old Testament. In this great receptacle of divine truth are contained three modes of prophetic evidence, each of them characterising the Messiah.

The first is contained in the *history of the Jews*, from the earliest period of it, till their settlement in Canaan. Here the resemblance, though in some parts faint, may in many parts be satisfactorily traced. — God's call of Abraham from an idolatrous country, if not a type, was at least a close representation of the gracious call of mankind by Christ from the pollutions of the world: and that faith, by which the patriarch was led through all

the difficulties of his travels, was precisely that faith, which Christ requires from us in passing through a state of trial. For this we have St. Paul's authority *. — The miraculous birth of Isaac, the child of promise, was a type of the birth of Christ; as his sacrifice was of Christ's death. — The bondage of the children of Israel in Egypt was a lively representation of the bondage of sin, from which Christ delivered us: and Moses, as a deliverer, was a type of Christ. He himself alludes to it, when he tells the people that *God should raise unto them a prophet, like unto him †*: that is a deliverer, as he had been. — The travels of the children of Israel through the wilderness were productive of many prophetic events. Their miraculous supply of food from heaven — their thirst quenched by water from a rock, which St. Paul tells us was an emblem of Christ ‡ — and the lifting up of the brazen serpent, which our Saviour himself mentions as a representation of his crucifixion § — may all be called *historical prophecies* of different parts of the Christian dispensation. — Lastly, after this probationary travel through the wilderness was over, the settlement of the Jews in the land of promise under Joshua, is represented in Scripture, as a type of the Christian's rest in a state of happiness, through Christ.

Another mode of *prophetic evidence*, contained in the books of the Old Testament, is wonderfully displayed in the various ceremonies of the Jewish church, after its perfect establishment. Almost every one of these ceremonies pointed strongly to Christ. — But there is something here rather singular. The *history* of the Jews, we

* See Gal. iii. 6, 7.

† 1 Cor. x. 4.

‡ Heb. iv. 1—12.

† Deut. xviii. 15.

§ John, iii. 14.

see, presents a typical representation of the *whole scheme* of our redemption: whereas the *rites and ceremonies* of the Jewish church are confined almost entirely to that one great end of it, the atonement which Christ made by his death for the sins of mankind. Thus the sacrifices of the temple, in all their various kinds, set forth, in different views, the shedding of his sacred blood, and that expiation for sin which it was intended to make. The scape-goat, which was sent into the wilderness, after the sins of the people had been confessed over it, represented the same great end. The passover, though primarily instituted in remembrance of the angel's passing over the houses of the Israelites, when he slew the first-born of the Egyptians, had reference also to that great paschal lamb, which was slain for the sins of mankind. The veil of the temple, which separated the Holy of Holies from the other parts of the temple, shewed its connection, at the time of Christ's death, with that great event. The partition-wall between the Jews and Gentiles was then broken down. — The high-priest entering the Holy of Holies, to make atonement for his own sins, and the sins of the people, respected plainly that great intercession, which was afterwards to be made by Christ. Many other typical representations might be insisted on.

The third mode of *prophetic evidence* is that which arises from *verbal prophecy*. This is by far the most extensive and the most determined; concentrating in itself both the others. It is this only, which I mean at present to consider as an introduction to the evangelical life of Christ: and in order to place it in the strongest point of light, I shall collect from the whole mass of prophecy those predictions only, which appertain the *most evidently* to the life, and death, and functions of the Messiah: and

I shall rather arrange them in the order of time in which they were *completed*, than in the order of time in which they were *given*.

But before I produce these prophecies, I shall say a few words in answer to some objections that have been made to them. And though these objections have been fully answered by learned men, it is not proper to leave them here wholly untouched. — It hath been said particularly, that *there is much heterogeneous matter mixed with the prophecies of the Old Testament, so as greatly to obscure them*; and, that *the Jews themselves, who ought to be best acquainted with their own scriptures, do not apply the prophetic parts of them to Christ, in the manner we Christians do*.

With regard to the first objection, that *there is much heterogeneous matter mixed with the prophecies, so as greatly to obscure them*; it is true: and freethinkers have sometimes amused themselves, by making centos of prophecies from Homer and Virgil, and other authors. But a jest is no argument; nor a *general resemblance a proper likeness*. To find out *general resemblances* among things, is one of the easiest offices of invention. If the freethinker can produce from Homer and Virgil, such a series of passages applicable to the life and death of the Messiah, as may be produced from the Writings of the Old Testament; I should be inclined to receive Homer and Virgil among the prophets. If not, the jest recoils upon the jester. — Let us then candidly examine the objection, by shewing, first, the *manner* in which prophetic notices are conveyed; and, secondly, the *propriety* of that manner. — The prophet generally takes a handle from some occasion, (on which he is consulted, or on which he encourages, exhorts, or threatens,) to carry his view beyond the primary idea; and to mix with it some circumstance relating to
the

the kingdom of the Messiah. Thus when Isaiah was sent to Ahaz in his distress on the rumour of an invasion from the two kings of Syria and Israel, he carried, by the command of God, his infant son with him, as a sign to Ahaz. Ostensible signs were a common medium in the east, both of prophecy and instruction. He informed the king, therefore, that before the child he held in his arms, should learn to distinguish one thing from another, the land should be delivered from the two kings, of whom he was in dread. But immediately fired with the prophetic spirit, from the view of one child he proceeds to another; and breaks out into that noble prophecy of Emmanuel, who was to be the means of a still greater deliverance than that predicted from the two kings. Thus the prophet usually mixes some *future blessing* relative to the Messiah's kingdom, with the temporal blessing, which was the *immediate object* of his discourse—or some *future threat*, of which that *immediately impending* was only the sign. The *occasion*, therefore, becomes merely the *vehicle* of the prophecy: and, I apprehend, not only so in the greater prophecies, in which the light shines strongly and forcibly; but in what may be called the *coruscations* of prophecy—those transient, accidental rays, which are continually shooting out in various directions, and yet are capable of being collected into a strong light. — Let us now suppose the prophet, instead of involving his prediction in this obscurity, and taking the occasion that offered, had uttered his prophecy in set form, and in *plain historic language*, what would have been the consequence? Certainly they, whose interest it was, would have taken every measure to counteract the prophecy: and the providence of God, in order to bring about the completion of it, must have upheld it by a constant series of miracles, to thwart and oppose all the various schemes which would be laid by designing

designing men to counteract it. Whereas the prophecy, *veiled in this obscure form*, was often completed by those *very persons* who wished *least* to see it completed; and who, in fact, never knew that it *was completed*, till the completion *showed them in the face*. While at the same time, in its obscure form, it answered all the ends of prophecy to those who were well-disposed. Though *shining in a dark place*, it gave light sufficient to *raise the hopes* of the devout worshipper with a *distant view* of the Messiah; and when *fulfilled*, it *confirmed his faith*.

But still, with regard to the second objection, one should suppose that the Jews must have understood *their own* scriptures better than any other interpreters; and we are told they do not interpret them as we do. — *No*, indeed, they do not. They have *changed* their ground. But *formerly* they did. All the Jews, of whom there were great numbers, who at first embraced the Christian religion, *universally* did it on the strength of these prophecies. And that the Jewish nation in general interpreted the prophecies in this way, appears plain from the many false Christs and false prophets, who were continually, at that time, arising, to answer the ideas of the people by fulfilling the prophecies; though they became instrumentally the cause of the destruction of Jerusalem, by irritating the Romans, through their frequent rebellions. It is an argument of no mean force (says Dr. Lightfoot) against the Jews, that the time when our Jesus did appear, was the very time when the Jewish nation looked for the coming of the Messiah. For why did no one arrogate that name to himself, before the coming of our Jesus? Because they knew the appointed time of the Messiah was not yet come. And why, after his coming, did so many give themselves out for Messiahs, according to what our Saviour had foretold? Because

“ the

“the agreeableness of the time and the expectation of the people might serve and assist their pretences*.” — Besides, it is impossible to conceive that the evangelical writers could have quoted and applied the prophecies in the *familiar manner* they did, if they had not been well assured they applied them in that sense which was at that time the *commonly* received one. To this day, indeed, many of the Jews interpret most of the prophecies of the Messiah as we do; but will not allow the completion of them. They have sometimes recourse to the strange expedient of two Messiahs; a *suffering* and a *triumphant* one. In short, the Jews say as little as they can say, when they must say something, or else be Jews no longer. Among all the opponents of Christianity, the Jews certainly oppose the prophecies of the Messiah with the worst grace. While they continue a dispersed, wandering people, one should wonder with what face they can deny that *Shiloh* was come. In the *present state* of the Jewish people, the prophecies *could not* be fulfilled. There is now no temple left for the glory of the Messiah to fill — no Sanhedrim to oppose him — no Gentiles to inflict crucifixion. — Can even the family of David be now pointed out, to ascertain the Messiah’s birth? Besides, almost all the world, even the Mahometan part of it, profess their belief now in one God. The world must again change its object of worship, and become idolatrous, before the *Jewish Messiah*, according to prophecy, can appear. — Lastly, the very *opposition* of the Jews themselves adds strength to the cause they wish to oppose: for it is one of the prophetic marks of the truth of the Christian religion, (and the evangelists apply it as such,) that the Jews, as a nation, should reject

* See Lightfoot’s Heb. and Talmud. Exer. vol. ii. p. 576.

the Messiah — that they should *hear*, but would not *understand* — that they should *see*, but not *perceive* — that their eyes should be *darkened*, and their ears *shut* — that they should *reject* the *head stone of the corner* — and that God, according to the representation of the prophet Isaiah, *should all day long stretch forth his hands towards a disobedient and a gainsaying people*.

I trust that, even from this slight examination of these two objections against prophecy, it will appear, there is little force in either of them. At the same time, it is true, that all the prophecies are not equally clear, even to Christians themselves. All that I have collected, I believe, are *commonly* interpreted of the Messiah; and cannot be applied to any person but Christ. The amazing combination, particularly of *meanness* and *dignity*, of *suffering* and *exaltation*, which are among the leading ideas of these prophecies; so apparently *contradictory*, and yet so wonderfully *exact*, form an argument, I think, too strong to be easily evaded. After all, however, if a few of these quotations be not deemed by some to be of a prophetic cast, we resign them: a sufficient number, we trust, will still remain, to make out the proof abundantly convincing.

I have divided the whole collection into four sections. — The first exhibits a series of those prophecies which contain the *earliest* and most *remote* intimations of the Messiah. They are dark, it is true: but as they plainly appear to *center in one point*, they illustrate each other. Each prophecy, *considered apart*, might be called obscure; but the whole series *in combination* emits certainly a very strong light. They begin with predicting a *victory*, and an *everlasting covenant*, which was to take place *between God and all the nations of the earth*. Under the ideas of
a tree

a *tree* and a *mountain*, they hold out the *grandeur* and *dignity* of the Messiah's kingdom ; and in a variety of beautiful images, in which all nature is represented in harmony, and the wild beasts of the forest tamed, they exhibit that peace and happiness, and universal change in the manners of men, which this glorious, predicted reign was meant to introduce ; disclosing, at the same time, throughout, its *spiritual nature*, and the *transcendent joy* with which it ought to be received.

In the second section are exhibited those prophecies which relate to the *birth* of the Messiah. Here the prophetic language becomes more distinct and full. Those general intimations which were given before, begin now to *break* and *particularise*. The same lineaments appear ; but the features are more distinctly marked. The section opens with predicting the *forerunner of the Messiah*, in the person of John the Baptist. The prophecies of the Messiah's *birth* succeed ; and the wonderful peculiarity of his being *born of a virgin*. The *place* of his nativity is specified ; and the *characteristics* of his office and the *nature* of his government are strongly marked.

In the third section, I have collected such prophecies as appertain to the Messiah's *life*. The whole plan of it, indeed, is specified with as much precision as the figurative language in which these predictions are clothed is able to convey. He is represented as arrayed in the dignity of a *prophet*, like Moses ; and of a *priest*, like Melchizedec. At the same time, his *mean* and *suffering state* on earth is strongly characterised. His *gentleness* and *holiness* ; the great efficacy of his *preaching* ; the *offence* he gave to worldly men ; his repressing the *spirit of worldly wisdom* ; his *triumphant entry* into Jerusalem ; and his *divine presence* in the temple ; are all distinctly held out. The *variety*, and even the *kind*, of his *miracles* are specified ; and his *pastoral care* is
strongly

strongly represented by images highly expressive of tenderness and affection.

In the last section, I have collected such prophecies as appertain to the *death* of Christ. Here the prophetic spirit, as if imagery failed in describing the last scenes of this awful life, descends from its lofty flights, and marks the several circumstances of that solemn period in the plainest terms; but marks them also with almost historical precision. From his being *betrayed* by one of his disciples to his *resurrection*, there is scarce a single circumstance which one or other of the prophetic writers hath not mentioned. The bargain made for *thirty pieces* of silver — the *dispersion of the disciples* on the seizing of Jesus — the particulars of his *trial* — the *false witnesses* that appeared against him — the usage of the *soldiers* — the *mode* of his death — the *division* of his garments — the *behaviour of his enemies* during that awful period — the *time* of that great event — the *end* and *intention* of it — the *manner* of his *burial* — and his *triumphant resurrection* — all appear to be so exactly conformable to the history of the New Testament, that we might almost think them plain transcripts from it, if we had not the very best historical evidence that they were all written, published, and well known many hundred years — the latest of them above four hundred — before the birth of Christ.

SECTION I.

Containing the earliest intimation of the Messiah.

Gen.
iii. 15.

Gen.
xvii. 7.

I WILL put enmity between thee (said God to the serpent) and the woman — between thy seed, and her seed. It shall bruise thy head; and thou shalt bruise his heel. — I will establish

establish my covenant (said God to Abraham,) between thee and me; and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an *everlasting covenant*. — Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name Isaac; and I will establish my covenant with him for an *everlasting covenant*, and with his seed after him. And in thy seed shall *all the nations* of the earth be blessed. — I will perform the oath (said God to Isaac,) which I swore unto Abraham thy father; and in thy seed shall *all the nations* of the earth be blessed. — In thee, and in thy seed, (said God to Jacob,) shall *all the families* of the earth be blessed. — And it shall come to pass, (said God to David,) when thy days shall be expired, and thou shalt go to thy fathers, that I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons: and I will settle him in mine house *for ever*, and his *throne shall be established for evermore*. — I the Lord have called thee in righteousness: I will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant to the people, for a *light of the Gentiles*. — Thus saith the Lord, I will give thee for a covenant of the people — to establish the earth — to cause to inherit the desolate heritages. — Thus saith the Lord, if you can break my covenant of the day, and my covenant of the night, that there should not be days and nights in their seasons — then may also my covenant be broken with my servant David, that he should not have a son to reign upon his

Gen.
xvii. 19.Gen.
xxii. 18.
Gen.
xxvi. 3.Gen.
xxviii. 14.
I Chron.
xvii. 11.

Is. xlii. 6.

Is. xlix. 8.

Jer.
xxxiii. 20.

I Chron. xvii. 11. This seems to have been *immediately* spoken of Solomon; who was considered as a type of Christ: but the prophetic characters are evidently carried beyond a prince; from whose *immediate successor* the kingdom was rent.

Isa. xlii. 6. and xlix. 8. If the context be examined, the whole is evidently prophetic of the Messiah: but I wished here only to retain such passages as referred to the covenant.

Jer. xxxiii. 20. From this prophecy also that part only is taken which belongs to the covenant. It could have no respect *personally* to David or his *immediate* posterity, for it was spoken five hundred years after David's death.

- If. xi. 1. 2. throne. — There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse; and a branch shall go out of his roots; and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him; the Spirit of wisdom and understanding; the Spirit of counsel and might; the Spirit of knowledge, and the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord.
- Jer. xxiii. 5. — Behold the day is come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a *righteous branch*, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice on the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved; and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, *The Lord our righteousness*. — In those days will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. — Thus saith the Lord God, I will take the highest branch of the highest cedar; and I will plant it on a high mountain; and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar, and under it shall dwell all the fowls of every wing: in the shadow of the branches thereof shall they dwell.
- Zech. iii. 8. — Hear now, O Joshua, the high-priest, thou, and thy fellows, that sit before thee: Behold I will bring forth my servant the Branch — Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Behold the man whose name is the Branch; he shall grow up out of his place: and he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory: and he shall sit and rule upon his throne. — In the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and the people shall flow into it. — The Lord shall reign over them in mount Sion,
- Mic. iv. 1.
- Mic. iv. 7.

Jer. xxiii. 5. Here again the same successor is promised to David five hundred years after the death of that prince; which promise had been made before to the patriarchs, and to that prince himself.

from henceforth, even for ever. — And it shall come to pass If. ii. 2.
in the last days, that the mountain of the house of the Lord
shall be *established*, and shall be *enalted above the hills*, and all
nations shall flow into it. — And the stone, which was cut Dan.
out of the mountain *without hands*, shall become a great ii. 35.
mountain, and *fill the earth*. — And he will destroy in this If. xxv. 7.
mountain, the face of the covering cast over all people, and
the veil that is spread over all nations. — And many shall If. ii. 3.
say, Come ye, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to
the house of the God of Jacob: *he will teach us his ways*;
and we will walk in *his paths*: for out of Sion shall go forth
the law; and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem: and he
shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people;
and they shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their
spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not rise against na-
tion; neither shall they learn war any more. — The wolf If. xi. 6.
also shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young
lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.
And the cow and the bear shall feed, and their young ones
lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
The sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp; and the
weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den. And
they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for
the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters
cover the sea. And in that day, there shall be a root of Jesse,
which shall stand for an *ensign to the people*. To it shall the
Gentiles seek: and *his rest* shall be glorious. — The scepter Gen.
shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between xlix. 10.
his

If. xxv. 7. There is something extremely grand in thus repre-
senting the gospel as removing the darkness spread over all nations
by drawing up a vast curtain to let in the light.

Gen. xlix. 10. Some have objected that this prophecy was ful-
filled in Moses. But what scepter had Judah before Moses? The
word *Shiloh* signifies *sent*; and was always interpreted by the ancient
Vol. I. d Jews

- his feet, until *Shiloh* come: and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. — There shall come a *Star* out of Jacob, and a scepter shall arise out of Israel. — I will also give thee for a *light to the Gentiles*, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the *ends of the earth*. — I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man came in the clouds of heaven; and came to the Ancient of days. And there was given unto him *dominion and glory*, and a *kingdom*, that all *people, nations, and languages*, should serve him. *His dominion is an everlasting dominion*, which shall not pass away; and *his kingdom*, that which shall not be destroyed. — The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall *never be destroyed*, but shall stand for ever — Behold, I will give to Jerusalem one that bringeth good tidings — O Sion, that bringeth good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain. O Jerusalem, that bringeth good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength. Lift it up. Be not afraid. Say unto the cities of Judah, *Behold your God*. — Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the Lord hath *comforted his people*; and will have mercy on his afflicted. — Unto you that fear my name, shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings.
- Num. xxiv. 17.
Is. xlix. 6.
Dan. vii. 13.
Dan. ii. 44.
Is. xli. 27.
Is. xl. 9.
Is. xlix. 13.
Mal. iv. 2.

Jews of the Messiah. It is supposed, indeed, by many interpreters, that Moses himself alluded to this prophecy when he expresses his backwardness to God in going to Pharaoh. *Send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send* — that is, by the *Shiloh*, whom thou hast promised. How very exactly this prophecy was fulfilled, is very apparent. The dispersion of the Jews, independent of prophecy, is one of the most singular events in the history of mankind: but when we consider it as the completion of prophecy — when we consider this people dispersed and wandering among all the nations upon earth — without temples — without laws, without government — connected with none, but distinct from all — as if preserved to complete future prophecies — the whole together, I think, forms an argument of sufficient force to weigh against all the cavils of infidelity.

SECTION II.

Containing those prophecies which relate to the birth
of the Messiah.

THE voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, *Prepare ye* If. xl. 3.
the way of the Lord; make *straight* in the desert a highway for
our God. Every *valley* shall be *exalted*, and every *mountain*
and *hill* shall be made *low*; and the *crooked* shall be made
straight, and the *rough* places *plain*. And the *glory of the Lord*
shall be revealed, and *all flesh* shall see it together; for the mouth
of the Lord hath spoken it. — Behold, I will send you Mal. iv. 5.
Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the *great and dread-*
ful day of the Lord. — I will send my messenger, and he Mal. iii. 1.
shall *prepare the way before me*; and the *Lord, whom ye seek*,
shall suddenly come to his temple — even the *messenger of the*
covenant, whom ye delight in. Behold, *he shall come, saith the*
Lord of hosts. — I have set my king upon my holy hill of Pf. ii. 6.
Sion. Thou art my son; this day have I begotten thee. I
will give thee *the heathen* for thine *inheritance*; and the *utmost*
parts of the earth for thy *possession*. — The Lord himself If. vii. 14.
shall give you a sign; Behold, a *Virgin shall conceive*, and
bear a son, and shall call his name *Emmanuel*. — And thou, Mic. v. 2.
Bethlem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands

If. xl. 3. By *mountains* and *rough ways*, the prophet indicates the moral difficulties which the gospel tended to remove.

Pf. ii. 6. This prophecy of *the heathen, and the utmost parts of the earth as a possession*, is, in other language, the old patriarchal promise, in *thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*.

If. vii. 14. There is some difficulty in this prophecy. The two children seem to be confounded; and likewise the two signs — that to Ahaz, and that to the house of Israel: and many commentators have endeavoured, though none perhaps satisfactorily, to remove the obscurity. I think it probable that the text may be faulty. After all, however, the *prophecy itself*, that a *virgin shall conceive and bear a son*, and that his name should be *Emmanuel*, or *God with man*, stands clear of all difficulty, however the context or temporary prophecy which is connected with it may be involved in obscurity.

of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth, who is to be the ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old; from everlasting. — The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.

SECTION III.

Containing those prophecies which relate to the life of the Messiah — his preaching, and his miracles.

- Deut. xviii. 18. I WILL raise them a prophet from among their brethren (said God to Moses) like unto thee; and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command.
- If. liii. 2. — He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men — a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid, as it were, our faces from him. He was despised, and we esteemed him not. — He shall not cry, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets. — A bruised reed shall he not break; and smoking flax shall he not quench.
- If. lii. 7. He shall bring forth judgment with truth. — How beautiful

Deut. xviii. 18. That no prophet ever did arise in Israel like unto Moses, is taken notice of by Samuel, or whoever added the concluding part to the pentateuch. See Deut. xx. 10. The great leading characters in Moses, is his delivering Israel, and introducing a new law. These characters agree only in the Messiah. The great difference was, that his deliverance and his law were universal and perpetual; those of Moses, local and transitory.

If. xlii. 2. This prophecy sets the mildness and quietness of the Messiah in opposition to the severe and spirited character of the prophets,

upon

upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings — that *publisheth peace* — that *publisheth salvation* — that faith unto Sion, *thy God reigneth* — Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Sion; for lo! I come and will dwell in the midst of thee. And *many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day; and shall be my people*: and I will dwell in the midst of thee; and thou shalt know that the Lord hath sent me unto thee. — Behold my Servant, whom I have chosen — mine Elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not be discouraged, till he have set judgment on the earth; and the *isles shall wait for his law*. — He shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears*; but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked†. Righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. — The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek. He hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted — to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison unto them that are bound — to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. — And many nations shall come and say, Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the Lord shall go forth out of Sion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. — He shall be a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel. — This is the Lord's doing; and it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad. — Behold, I lay in Sion

Zech.
ii. 10.

Is. xlii. 10.

Is. xi. 3.

Is. lxi. 1.

Mic. iv. 2.

Is. vii. 14.
Pf.
cxviii. 22.
Is.
xxviii. 16.

* That is, he shall not take cognizance of actions from his senses; nor according to outward appearance.

† That is, the doctrine which he preaches shall make the eternal separation of good and bad.

a *foundation-stone*; a tried stone; a precious corner-stone; a sure foundation; he that *believeth* shall not be *confounded*. —

- If. I will do a marvellous work among this people. The *wisdom*
 xxix. 14. of their *wise men* shall *perish*; and the *understanding* of their
 Zech. *prudent men* shall be *hid*. — Rejoice greatly, O daughter of
 ix. 9. Sion. Shout; O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold, thy king
 cometh unto thee. He is just; and *having* salvation; lowly;
 Hag. and *riding upon an ass*; and a colt the foal of an ass. I will
 ii. 7-9. fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The *glory*
 of this *latter house* shall be greater than the *former*; and in *this*
 place will I give *peace*, saith the Lord of hosts. — Then
 If. shall the *eyes of the blind* be opened, and the *ears of the deaf*
 xxxv. 5. shall be unstopped. Then shall the *lame man* leap as a hart;
 If. xlii. 7. and the *tongue of the dumb man* shall sing. — He shall bring
 out the *prisoners*, and them that sit in *darkness*, out of the
 If. xlix. 9. prison-house. He shall say to the *prisoners*; Go forth; to
 If. xl. 11. them that sit in *darkness*, Shew yourselves. — He shall *feed*
 his *flocks* like a shepherd. He shall gather the lambs with
 his arms, and carry them in his bosom; and shall gently lead
 those that are with young. — They shall not hunger nor
 If. thirst; neither shall the heat nor the sun smite them; for he
 xlix. 10. that hath mercy on them shall lead them; even by the springs
 of water shall he guide them. They shall feed in the ways;
 and their pasture shall be in all high places.

SECTION IV.

Containing such prophecies as relate to the *death*, *atonement*,
resurrection, and *exaltation* of the Messiah.

- Pf. xli. 9. YEA, even mine own *familiar friend*, in whom I trusted,
 who did also eat of my bread, hath laid great *wait* for me,

If. xxxv. 5. It is observed, that no prophet wrought such mi-
 racles as these but Christ.

If. xlii. 7. The idea of a prison and prisoners, is very often ap-
 plied to a state of heathenism.

— And

— And I said, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price *thirty pieces of silver*, and I cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord.

— *Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.* — Zech. xi. 12.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he *opened not his mouth*: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is *dumb*, so he opened not his mouth.

He was taken from prison, and from judgment; and who shall declare his generation? — False witnesses did rise up against me: they laid to my charge things that I knew not. As for me, I was like a deaf man, and heard not; and as one that is dumb, and doth not open his mouth. — Many *dogs* are come about me, and the counsel of the wicked hath enclosed me. — I gave my *back to the smiters*, and my *cheeks* to them that plucked off the hair. — I hid not my face from shame and *spitting*. — They shall *smite* the judge of Israel with a *rod upon the cheek*. — They gave me *gall* to eat; and when I was thirsty, they gave me *vinegar* to drink. They *pierced* my *hands* and my *feet*. They *parted* my *garments* among them, and *cast lots on my vesture*. — And one shall say, what are these *wounds in thy hands*? Then he shall answer, Those, with which I was wounded in the house of my friends. — My God, my God, look upon me; why hast thou forsaken me? — All they that go by *laugh me to scorn*: they shoot out their lips, and shake their heads, saying, *He trusted in God to deliver him; let him deliver him, if he will have him*. — I will shew wonders in the heavens, and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The *sun* shall be turned into *darkness*, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come; and it shall

Zech. xiii. 7.
Pf. xxxv. 11.
Pf. xxxviii.
Pf. xxii. 16.
Mic. v. 1.
Pf. lxix. 21.
Pf. xxii. 17.
Zech. xiii. 6.
Pf. xxii. 1.
Joel ii. 30.

Pf. xxii. 16. This prophecy is descriptive of the Messiah's being put into the hands of the *heathen*. The word *dog* was universally applied by the Jews to the heathen. Thus our Saviour too applies it. Matt. xv. 26.

- Dan. ix. 24. come to pass, that whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. — Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to *finish the transgression*, and to *make an end of sins*, and to make *reconciliation for iniquity*, and to bring in *everlasting righteousness*, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to *anoint the most holy*. Know, therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment, to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seventy weeks; and threescore and two weeks the streets shall be built again, and the wall even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall
 If. liii. 4. *Messiah be cut off, but not for himself*. — Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgression; he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. It pleased the Lord to bruise him: he hath put him to grief. Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin. He hath poured out his soul unto death. He was numbered with transgressors; and he shall bear the
 Zech. xii. 10. *sins of many; and make intercession for transgressors* *. — And I will pour out upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace, and of supplications: and they shall look upon him whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for an only son.
 Ex. xii. 46. — A bone of him shall not be broken. — In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness. — He
 Zech. xiii. 1.

* There are similar expressions in the 40th psalm: *My sins have taken such hold of me, that I am not able to look up*; is a passage explained by 1 Peter ii. 24. *Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree*. Indeed the whole 40th psalm is applied by many learned expositors to Christ.

made his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death. If. liii. 9.
 — Why do the heathen so furiously rage together? The Pl. ii. 1.
 kings of the earth stand up; the rulers take counsel against the
 Lord, and against his anointed. — He that dwelleth in heaven
 shall laugh them to scorn. The Lord shall have them in
 derision. — Thou shalt not leave my soul in hell; neither PL
 shalt thou suffer thine holy One to see corruption. — After xvi. 11.
 two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us Hof. vi. 2.
 up, and we will live in his sight. — I know that my re- Job.
 deemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon xix. 25.
 the earth. — I will ransom them from the power of the grave: Hof.
 I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy plague: xiii. 14.
 O grave, I will be thy destruction. — The Lord said unto Pl. cx. 1.
 my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine ene-
 mies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy power
 out of Sion: be thou ruler even in the midst of thine enemies.
 In the day of thy power shall the people offer thee free-will
 offerings with a holy worship. The Lord sware, and will
 not repent: Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of
 Melchisedec.

I shall conclude this whole collection of prophecies with
 an excellent passage from Bishop Hurd's sermons on pro-
 phesy.

Hof. vi. 2. In this passage and in others the prophets speak in
 the plural: but it was a common idea to consider Christ as rising,
 accompanied with all the faithful. Thus St. Paul: *If we believe
 that Jesus died and rose again: even so them which sleep in Jesus, shall
 God bring with him.* However, this passage in Hosea is often in-
 terpreted in a different manner.

Pl. cx. 1. The whole psalm from whence this passage is taken,
 is commonly contrasted with the twenty-second, which contains a
 full prophecy of the humiliation of Christ, as this does of his exalta-
 tion. They are both quoted in this light frequently by our Saviour
 and his apostles. — The 72d and 89th psalms seem to relate to the
 establishment of the Messiah's kingdom. They are full of expressions
 which cannot possibly relate to David or to any other subject.

“ The argument from prophecy lies merely in the evidence produced, that certain passages were delivered in the Old Testament, and have been fulfilled by certain correspondent events related in the New. The argument doth in no degree depend on faith; but is calculated to produce it. It is equally strong, or equally weak, to a Christian, or a Jew, or an unbeliever — the sole point in question being this; whether such things as were prophetically delivered, appear to have been fulfilled — a point on which common sense and common honesty will equally decide, on every supposition.”

Sermon V. p. 154.

END OF THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST.



THE GOSPEL
OF
SAINT MATTHEW.

THE CORNER

THE CORNER

P R E F A C E

TO

ST. MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.

WE know nothing certain of the history of St. Matthew, but what he himself and the other evangelists relate; which includes little more than what passed during our Saviour's ministry. Where he lived afterwards—where he suffered martyrdom—or whether he suffered martyrdom at all—we have no accounts that can be depended on.

Some commentators, both ancient and modern, are of opinion that he wrote in Hebrew; and that the Greek we now have is a translation. But Dr. Lardner, on examining all the evidence that hath been produced on both sides, is of opinion, that St. Matthew's gospel was most probably written in Greek, as we now have it*.

This gospel is certainly the most circumstantial account we have of the transactions of our blessed Saviour. It hath also another advantage over St. Mark's gospel, and St. Luke's—it was written by an eye-witness. It is therefore deservedly placed at the head of the sacred canon;

* See Lardner's *Hist. of the Apostles and Evangelists*.

and,

and, I should think, hath a fairer title than any other to be the guide in all those little variations which we find among the evangelists.

One of the great peculiarities of St. Matthew is, the constant attention he pays to the completion of those prophecies which respected our blessed Saviour.

LEITCH & WILKINSON

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ST. MATTHEW.

THE circumstances, which attended the birth of CHAP. I.
 Jesus Christ, who sprang in a direct line from
 David, were these.

Joseph, who had been betrothed to Mary, the mother of Jesus, found her with child before their marriage : but being a compassionate man, and unwilling

1. 2. 3. 4.
 5. 6. 7. 8.
 9. 10. 11.
 12. 13. 14.
 15. 16. 17.
 18. 19.

1. *The book of the generations of Jesus Christ.* This phrase does not apply merely to the *genealogy*, but also to the *life and history* of Christ; as in Gen. vi. 9. *these are the generations of Noah*; under which title is exhibited his *history* as well as *family*.

1. The prophecies which declare Jesus to be the son of David, seem to be sufficiently fulfilled, if Joseph, his *reputed and legal father*, sprang from that prince. And this indeed seems to have been the idea of the angel, in his speech to Joseph, in which, there is something emphatical, *Joseph, THOU SON OF DAVID, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife.* — But for farther satisfaction with regard to the pedigree of Jesus, see the notes on Luke ii. 4. and on Luke iii. 23. The family of David reigned in Judea, till the Babylonish captivity. After that event, they fell into the utmost obscurity; yet still preserved their pedigree, as all Jewish families did. The government, after the return of the Jews from Babylon, was held by the priests, and the Maccabees; till Herod the Edomite was made king of Judea by the Romans.

18. Christ in Greek, signifies *anointed*, as *Messiah* does in Hebrew.

19. The Jewish law considered incontinence in a betrothed woman, in the light of adultery; and punished it with death. — Perhaps no word in the New Testament is applied more variously, than the word *δικαιοσύνη*. It is applied to God: it is applied to Christ: it is applied to men: it is applied to things.

willing to treat her with severity, he determined to break his engagements with her as privately as he could.

While his thoughts were employed on this subject, it pleased God to reveal to him in a vision the particulars of this mysterious birth; and to point out to him as a confirmation of what he had revealed,

23. the prophecy of Isaiah; *Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bring forth a son, who shall be called Emmanuel, or, God with man.*—Joseph, thus convinced of her innocence, and high exaltation, received her joyfully; but did not marry her, till after the birth of her son; whom he named Jesus.

CHAP. II. This extraordinary birth was published by the following event. Certain eastern Magi came to Jerusalem,

1.

I conceive therefore it has not always a determined meaning; but is often meant to point out that particular perfection, excellence, or virtue, which the case requires. When it is applied to God, it is meant to comprehend all the divine perfections; and here, when applied to Joseph, it perhaps marks that particular virtue, which was in his case required; and which, from the context, we are led to suppose was *mercy*. In the 9th chapter of the second epistle to the Corinthians (verse 10), *δικαιοσύνη* evidently means *liberality*.

23. This prophecy of Isaiah (vii. 14.), and other passages of scripture of the same purport, one should think, were enough to establish the divinity of our blessed Saviour. The Unitarian can produce no one reason, on his system, why the *divinity* of Christ should ever be mentioned, as it often is, in scripture: but there is an evident reason, why his *humanity* should be mentioned; as he is *God with man*, according to the prophecy before us, or *God manifested in the flesh*, as it is explained by St. Paul 1 Tim. iii. 16.

—This verse and the following, according to our translation, are inserted as a remark of the evangelist's; but they are evidently a continuation of the angel's discourse.

1. In many parts of Persia and Arabia, colleges of Magi were settled, who studied astronomy, and other sciences, and devoted themselves to a purer religion, than was observed by any of their heathen neighbours. In these colleges many Jews resided during

Jerusalem, and inquired for the king of the Jews, who was then just born; declaring they had seen a star in their own country, which directed them to Judea. 2.

The jealousy of Herod, who reigned over the Jews at that time, was excited by so uncommon an inquiry. He called the chief-priests therefore together; and having been instructed by them, from the prophets, that Bethlehem was the place of the Messiah's 3.
4. 5. 6. 7.

the captivity. For the Magi adored one invisible God, and probably made no objection to the Jewish mode of worship. Daniel was certainly at the head of some institution of this kind; (Dan. v. 11.) and Elymas, who is improperly called a *forceer*, was a Jewish Magus (Acts xiii. 6.). Many learned men therefore have thought that the Magi here mentioned, were probably Jews, or however Jewish proselytes.

2. If the *star* were the appearance of that divine light, which the Jews called the *Shechinah*, it was a sign well adapted to them. If it had really the *appearance of a star*, it was as well adapted to the *Gentiles*, who had greater faith in *ruling stars*, and considered a *new star*, as prognosticating the birth a *great prince*.

3. This was Herod the Great. Many princes, of the name of Herod, reigned afterwards in Judea, which must be attended to, or it will create confusion — The word *ταρσοω* which signifies *to agitate* is used here to signify the agitation, both of *Herod*, and the *people*; though it is evident they were agitated in different ways. It is often used in describing *various passions*; and in this sense we suppose it is used here. See Parkh. Lexicon on this word.

4. That is, he called together the heads of the several courses of priests, as mentioned, 1 Chron. xxiv. 4. &c.

6. *Bethlehem Judab*; and *Bethlehem Ephratah*, as it is called in Micah, (v. 2.) were the same place. This town is mentioned Gen. xxxv. 9. There was another town of the name of Bethlehem, belonging to the tribe of Zebulun. — As Matthew wrote his gospel chiefly for the use of the Hebrews, it was his business to establish the completion of those two great prophecies, that Jesus was born of the lineage of David; and in the town of Bethlehem. — The best account we have of the present state of Bethlehem is given us in the Abbé Mariti's travels into Syria. It stands, he tells us, on a lofty hill; and commands a view over several beautiful vallies rich with flowers, and screened by mountains, covered with wood. The ruins of St. Mary's church, which was built in the time of Constantine, are uncommonly magnificent.

8. birth, he gave this information to the Magi ; with a private charge, that when they had found the prince, of whom they were in search, they should acquaint him with his place of residence, that he also might pay his devotion to him.
9. 10. Thus instructed, the Magi pursued their journey to Bethlehem ; and, to their great joy, saw the star, which had led them from their own country, still preceding them, till it stood over the house, where the holy child was born.—Having performed their devotions, and presented gifts to him, after the manner of their country, they returned home : but by a different road ; as they had been warned by God, in a vision, to have no farther intercourse with Herod.
11. 12. Soon after, Joseph, on the same divine admonition, carried the holy child, and his mother, into Egypt, to avoid the wrath of Herod : thus completely fulfilling in Christ, the words of the prophet Hosea, *Out of Egypt have I called my son*, which were applied first to the deliverance of the children of Israel from the bondage of that country.
13. 14. 15. Herod being thus disappointed, in a violent rage, put to death all the male children under two years of age

11. It was a custom in the east, and still prevails, to approach great people with presents. These presents however were often of the most trifling nature ; a flower, or an orange, was sufficient. The very valuable presents therefore which the Magi offered, notwithstanding they found the child in so mean a condition, shewed the strong ideas with which they were impressed of his dignity.

15. Hosea, xi. 1.

16. *Tis wondrous* the male children only. Herod is made more wicked, in our translation, than he really was.—Macrobius, a heathen

age in Bethlehem, and its neighbourhood : concluding that Jesus could not escape so general a slaughter. Then was *completely* fulfilled the prediction of Jeremiah : *In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning ; Rachel weeping for her children, and refusing comfort because they were destroyed.* 17, 18.

After Herod's death, Joseph, by the direction of God, returned with the child into Judea ; and afterwards, 19 20. 21. 22. 23.

heathen author, who lived about the end of the fourth century, mentions this massacre. Augustus, says he, having been informed, that Herod had ordered a son of his own to be killed, among some children whom he had put to death in Syria, said (in allusion to the prohibition of swine's flesh among the Jews) that, *it was better to be Herod's hog, than his son.* The emperor, according to Macrobius's quotation, seems to have played upon the words ; it was better to be Herod's *us n uior* Saturn, ii. 4. — Macrobius fixes the fact in Syria properly enough, because Judea was then a part of the province of Syria. See Tac. c. xii.

18. Jer. xxxi. 15.

22. The copulative Δ is very improperly rendered *notwithstanding* ; it should be rendered *and*, or *but*.

23. This a difficult passage. It is not easy, in the first place, to point out any prophecy, to which the words, *he shall be called a Nazarene*, allude. — But secondly, if they refer, as is commonly supposed, to Judges xiii. 5. where it is said of Sampson, that he shall be *a Nazarite from the womb*, it is as difficult to apply them. A *Nazarite*, from a Hebrew word, which signifies *so separate*, was a person dedicated to God by some particular ceremonies, and for some particular purpose. Such a person was Sampson, who was appointed to deliver the children of Israel from the Philistines. And indeed Sampson seems to be no improper type of Christ, as by *his single power* he effected that deliverance. — But then how comes it that St. Matthew says, Christ received the appellation of a *Nazarite*. not from his being thus *separated*, but from his living at *Nazareth*, which has nothing to do with the profession of a *Nazarite*, nor is in any way connected with it, except in the similarity of the name. It seems to me, tho' I dare not lay much stress on the interpretation, that the Evangelist's meaning in this. — Jesus, who was in fact a *Nazarite*,

wards, on hearing that Archelaus had succeeded his father Herod, retired to Nazareth in Galilee; from which town Jesus was called a *Nazarene*, or a *Nazarete*; conformably to the character and office he bore, as foretold by the prophets.

CHAP.

III

1.

2. 3.

About the 30th year of Jesus's life, which had thus far been spent in this obscure retreat, John the Baptist began to draw the attention of mankind. He preached in the desert parts of Judea; declaring the approach of the Messiah; and persuading men to repent; agreeably to the prophecy of Isaiah, *The voice of one trying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way*

rite, in the strictest sense of the word, and according to all the predictions of the prophets, did not however receive the appellation from his conforming to the Levitical law, but was called a *Nazarene* or *Nazarite*, merely from his having spent the greatest part of his life at *Nazareth*. So that from this *accidental circumstance*, he received that name, which, in so appropriated a manner, was due to him from his *office*. — A very sensible and learned correspondent, gives me another interpretation of this difficult passage. "I do not recollect," says he, "that Jesus is ever called a Nazarete. His own account of himself was, that he came both eating and drinking. But Nazareth was at the bottom of all his sufferings; and prejudiced the whole Jewish nation against him. The candid Nathaniel cried out, 'Can any thing good come out of Galilee?' Nicodemus was reproached with being the friend of the Galilean. Nazareth eclipsed the splendor of his miracles and wisdom: Is not this the carpenter of Nazareth? Nazareth was the object of his arraignment before Pilate: He stirreth up the people from Galilee to this place. Nazareth is pointed out at his death as the great ground of reproach; Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews. So that though Nazareth is not mentioned in the prophets, they are full of that contemptuous treatment, which was in so great degree occasioned by that name."

2. The word *μετανοια* signifies a *change of mind*; and, in a religious sense, a *change of heart from evil to good*, which is the scriptural idea of repentance.

of the Lord; make his paths straight. — This extraordinary person appeared with great strictness of life. His raiment was a mantle of the coarsest hair, tied round him with a leathern girdle; and his food, such only as the desert afforded. — His fame as a prophet, and a teacher, soon drew a numerous company around him; who, being convinced by his doctrine, confessed their sins, and were baptised. — Among others, who attended him, John observed many of the Scribes and Pharisees; and knowing probably, they came either out of pride or curiosity; or perhaps that they trusted only in outward observances, he accosted them with some severity: “Perverse men, cried he, search your hearts, and find what motives have brought you here. If indeed you are in earnest, let your lives shew it. It is not your descent from Abraham, that can save you. Other

4. It is somewhat remarkable, that Elijah the prophet, in *whose spirit and power John the Baptist came*, is described in scripture in this very dress. *He was a hairy man*, (dressed in a mantle of hair or skin) *and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins.* 2 Kings, i. 8. — There is much dispute about the meaning of the word *locust*; but as we know from Pliny (lib. vii. 30.) that the insect of that name, was dried, and used as food in the east, we have reason to suppose this insect is meant.

5. The prophetic office had ceased since the days of Malachi, who lived near 400 years before Christ: so that a person of John's extraordinary appearance, who took on him the name of a prophet, drew great attention from the people.

6. *They were baptized in Jordan, confessing their sins*: that is, they were received as profelytes, and baptised in the name of the expected Messiah; confessing, in general, their sinful lives, and renouncing the opinion of justification by their own works. See Lightfoot, v. ii. p. 122.

7. See Mark vii. 1 — 14. Γεννηματα ἐχιδνῶν — descendants, not of the faithful Abraham, but of the old serpent, which first withstood the will of God.

10. children will soon be multiplied unto Abraham: The end of the Jewish law is approaching. A kingdom of righteousness will soon be established; to which my
 11. office is a preparation. The Messiah's superior
 12. power will baptise you with the holy spirit of God. His religion will try the hearts of men; and open, in a new manner, the eternal consequences of their actions."
13. While John was thus preaching to the people,
 14. Jesus himself came to him to be baptised. But John, with great humility, refused to baptise a person so much his superior; till Jesus informed him,
 15. that it was a necessary preparation to his public appearance in the world. The ceremony was then
 16. performed; and God was pleased to close it with a miracle. The clouds breaking, as Jesus ascended from the water, a divine light was shed abroad,

12. The word *fire* is used in scripture, both as the *symbol of purity*, and as the *instrument of vengeance*. The Talmudists say, that angels bathe themselves in rivers of fire.

16. There is no mention made of a *light*: but the *opening of the heavens* plainly suggests that idea; especially as on other occasions, these miraculous communications were attended with a light; as in the descent of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles; and in the conversion of St. Paul. It was probably that divine appearance which the Jews called the Shechinah. — *The bodily appearance of a dove* is generally, and justly exploded by almost all commentators. *ὡς περιστεραν* may as properly be translated, *in the manner of a dove*. The mode of flying in this bird is peculiarly beautiful. It seems to have struck Virgil:

Aëre lapsa quieto

Redit iter liquidum, celeres neque commovet alas.

So that the light hovered over Jesus something like the fluttering motion of a dove. The light, which appeared on the apostles, at the descent of the Holy Ghost, was not fire; but it appeared like fire, *ὡς πυρ*; as the other was not a dove; but *ὡς περιστεραν*.

which hung hovering over him : while an awful voice, from the midst of the illumination, proclaimed, “ *This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.*”

One thing more remained, before Jesus made his public appearance in the world. It pleased God to shew, that that Saviour, who was to die for sin, was himself free from sin : and that he who was to succour his faithful servants in temptation, both knew what temptation was ; and was himself beyond its power*.

CHAP.
IV.
1.

* Hebr. ii. 18. Hebr. iv. 15.

1. The wilderness here mentioned, is supposed to be that wild desert country, of which Mr. Maundrel, (p. 79.) whose account I abridge, gives the following description. — “ From this place we proceed in an intricate way, among hills, and vallies, all of a very barren aspect at present ; though discovering evident signs of culture in ancient times. In a few hours we arrived at that mountainous desert, in which our Saviour was tempted. It is a miserable, dry, barren scene, consisting of high rocky mountains, so torn, and disordered, as if the earth had suffered some great convulsion. As we looked down a valley on the left, we saw some ruins of cottages, which we were told, were formerly the habitations of hermits. From these high grounds we had a delightful prospect over the plains of Jericho, the dead sea, and the mountains of Arabia. On descending into the plain, we soon came to the foot of mount Quarantania, which we were informed, is the mountain, from whence the devil tempted our Saviour with the visionary scene of all the kingdoms of this world. It is, as St. Matthew calls it, *an exceeding high mountain* : and in its ascent, difficult, and dangerous. On the top of it stands a small chapel ; and half way up the ascent, another on the prominent ledge of a rock. On the side of the mountain also are several caves, in which hermits used formerly to keep their lent. In these caves we found small bodies of Arabs, quartered, with fire-arms ; who demanded 200 dollars for permitting us to climb the mountains ; which was a greater sum than we chose to give.”

With

4. With this view Jesus retired, under the guidance of the spirit, into a desert place ; where, undergoing a long fast, as the great prophets of the law, Moses and Elijah, had formerly done, he began to faint.

3. At that critical moment, the tempter appearing before him, made his first application to the necessities of his nature. " If you be the Son of God," said he, command these stones to be made bread." Jesus gave his answer a spiritual turn, implying, that mere earthly food was not so necessary to man, as the heavenly food of religion, and truth ; and that man ought always to depend, in his exigencies, upon the providence of God. On this answer, the Devil

3. Some commentators have resolved this whole account of our Saviour's temptation into a vision ; but I know not on what ground, except its being accompanied with some difficulties, which we cannot easily solve ; and this would be as good a reason for taking the same liberty with any part of scripture which we happen to dislike. The *figurative style* of scripture is a different thing. Common sense tells us, that when our Saviour speaks of *cutting off a right hand*, or *plucking out a right eye*, he could only mean *renouncing our bad desires*. But when the account of a transaction is given in a plain historical manner, we are not certainly to apply the same rule to *fact*, which we may allowedly apply to *style*. This passage of scripture, no doubt, hath its difficulties. I have prefaced the account of it with a few conjectures at the design, and intention of it ; which seem to be founded on scriptural authority. — It may possibly have reference to the great original source of sin. The first Adam was tempted by the devil, and foiled ; the second Adam was tempted and overcame. — I might add, that St. Mark's blending it, in his cursory manner, among historical facts, (Mark i. 12.) is a strong corroboration of its reality. Indeed I see no end it answers as a vision ; but many as an historical fact.

4. In this answer Jesus alluded to Deut. viii. 3.

5. Though it appears hardly criticism to consider the temptation of Christ as a vision ; yet I am much inclined to suppose the wilderness to be the *only scene* of the whole transaction. The idea of

Devil framed his second temptation. Having raised the appearance of the temple of Jerusalem, he placed Jesus on one of its battlements; and wished him, if he thus trusted in the providence of God, to make a trial: "Throw yourself down said he, from this height, and see whether that God, in whom you trust, will send his angels, to sustain you from harm." 6. Jesus answered in a passage from Moses, intimating that we ought not to try any unnecessary experiments of God's power in our preservation; but that it was enough to rely on him in all unavoidable difficulties. The devil being thus foiled in his first attempts on Jesus, endeavoured next to find out, whether there were in him any latent sparks of ambition, or love of pleasure; and placing him on a high moun- 7. 8. 9.

of supposing the devil to carry our Saviour to Jerusalem, appears to me much harsher, than to suppose him capable of raising an illusive scene, like Jerusalem. The Evangelists are never exact in trivial circumstances; but keep the main point in view; and it is, in fact, of no consequence, with regard to the temptation, whether the scene were real or illusive. St. Luke's expression, *he showed him all the kingdoms of the world, in a moment of time*, rather leads to the supposition of an *ideal scene*. Most interpreters understand by *πασας τας βασιλειας της οικουμένης*, only the country of Judea; The word *οικουμένη* alone, no doubt, sometimes has that interpretation; but in *conjunction*, as it stands, with the other words of the sentence, I think, it is a stronger expression, than such an interpretation warrants: and the words, *in a moment of time*, give it still more the air of an *illusive scene*. If then we admit one representation to be allusive, we may suppose the *other* to have been so likewise: nor is it more improbable that the devil should raise a scene like *the holy city, and the temple*; than like *all the kingdoms of the earth*. — What the devil's power was, before Christianity, we know not; but we are led, from the consideration of oracles, and possessions, to believe it greater, at least more ostensible, than it has been since. Perhaps when our Saviour says, *He saw Satan, as lightning fall from heaven*, he speaks of this abridgment of his power,

tain;

tain ; "Look round, said he, from this lofty stand : See all the kingdoms of the earth spread before you — all their wealth — all their glory — and all their pleasures — all is mine, and shall be yours, if you will only give up your trust in God ; and place it in me."

10. 11. This was too great an indignity for Jesus to bear. He rebuked the devil with authority, and sent him away ; on which angels came, and ministered unto him.

12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. In these solitary regions, Jesus had now spent some time, when hearing of the imprisonment of John, he returned to Nazareth : and from thence proceeded to Capernaum, a town of some resort, seated on the lake of Genesareth*. At this place he began his ministry ; and thus completely fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah † ; *The land of Zabulon, and Naphthalin, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan — Galilee of the Gentiles ‡ — the people, which sat in darkness, saw a*

* This lake is called also *the sea of Galilee*, and the *lake of Tiberias*. It was called the lake of Tiberias from a town of that name, which was seated on its western shore. Near this town Herod had a palace, and beautiful hanging gardens running along the banks of the lake ; from which gardens some derive the name *Genesareth*. Others suppose it to have been a corruption of the ancient *Cinnereth*, spoken of in Numb. xxxiv. 11.

† 17. From the mention of the imprisonment of John, just before Jesus assumed his public character, we are rather led to suppose the evangelist might imply, that Jesus began his own ministry, about the time that John concluded his. This idea seems confirmed by Mar. i. 14.

‡ Is. ix. 1.

† The whole of Galilee was, in fact, Jewish land ; but the upper part of it was so much frequented by the heathen nations, bordering on it, that it obtained the name of *Galilee of the Gentiles*.

great light ; and to them, which sat in the region, and shadow of death, light is sprung up.

At the time, when Jesus began his ministry, he chose certain disciples, to attend him as the witnesses of his life and doctrine. He first chose two brothers, Peter and Andrew, inhabitants of Capernaum ; whom he found following their calling as fishermen, on the lake ; and soon afterwards, James, and John, two other brothers, who were fishermen likewise. All four immediately left their friends and occupation, and followed him. Accompanied by these

18.19.20.

21. 22.

23.

21. Zebedee, the father of James and John, does not seem to have been a person in the lowest circumstances. He had a boat, and nets, and hired servants. The two brothers therefore not only left a calling, but a gainful one, which they seem to have had the means of carrying on with credit.

23. We shall find our Saviour's miracles, as we proceed in the history, not only *confirming*, but *illustrating* his divine authority. His giving sight to the blind illustrated his power to illuminate the prejudiced minds of men — his healing their bodies shewed his power to heal their souls, and forgive their sins — his casting out devils displayed his final victory over the devil — and his raising the dead, his power to accomplish a general resurrection. — This places them in a stronger and more beautiful light, than when they are considered only as acts of beneficence, or proofs of authority. — Some writers, I think, carry the idea of allegory too far. Many of our Saviour's miracles, no doubt, admit of very beautiful allegory, as when St. Peter was called from the boat ; (see a note on Matt. xiv. 25.) and when the blind man was sent to walk in the pool of Siloam ; (see a note on John ix. 7.) but it is rather forced, when a writer sits down on set purpose, as some have done, to draw every thing into allegory. It was, no doubt, the *primary* intention of the miracles of our blessed Saviour, to authenticate his divine commission. Both he and his apostles constantly appeal to them as such. Every thing else is of *secondary* consideration. — With regard to our Saviour's healing the sick, it hath been observed, that he healed no disorders, but such as were

of

these attendants, he went through Galilee, preaching in the synagogues, and confirming his divine authority by miraculously healing the sick. His fame soon spread throughout all parts: numbers of diseased folks were brought to him; and multitudes of people attended all his motions.

CHAP.
V.

1. 2.

Jesus having laid a sufficient foundation for their faith by his miracles, thought it right to open next the great truths of his religion. And that he might be heard with more ease, he ascended a rising ground, and calling to him all who wished to profit from his doctrine, he delivered his first discourse in the following manner.

3.

He began by pronouncing a blessing on several characters, dispositions, and situations in life, which were commonly treated with the greatest neglect; and were opposite to those ideas of grandeur, which the people had generally conceived of the Messiah's kingdom. — Blessed, said he, are the humble and lowly-minded, who neither value themselves on their

of themselves incurable. This is not the fact; a *fever*, for instance, is a curable disorder; and so is a *leprosy*, as may be supposed from the legal purgation appointed for it. The stress therefore is laid by these interpreters on the wrong point. The miracle did not consist in the *kind of disorder* cured; but in the *instantaneous manner* in which the cure was effected.

1. It is evident (from Matt. vii. 28.; and Luke vii. 1.) that all well-disposed people are here meant by the word *disciples*. The twelve apostles do not appear to have been yet commissioned. And indeed all the precepts of this discourse seem to be of *general* utility. The 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th verses have most the appearance of a particular application to the *teachers* of religion; but they are very capable of a more enlarged acceptance.

attain-

attainments, nor on the advantages of the world :
 nor, if they have them not, repine at the want of
 them. These alone are truly disposed to embrace my
 religion. — Blessed are they, who having disengaged
 themselves from the indulgencies, and vanities of life,
 pass through it in that serious manner, that becomes
 a state of trial. Their self-denial here shall be their
 comfort hereafter. — Blessed are the meek, the gen-
 tle, and inoffensive. Their happiness in this world, is
 an earnest of that blessing, which shall attend them in
 the next. — Blessed are they, who feel piety as neces-
 sary to their existence, as their food. They shall cer-
 tainly receive that increase of it, which they so earnest-
 ly desire. — Blessed is the humane and merciful
 man. His mercy to others, will, in time of need,
 call down mercy on himself. — Blessed are they
 whose hearts and affections are cleansed from im-
 purity. Such heavenly minds alone have intercourse
 with God. — Blessed are they, who are not satisfied
 with a mere inoffensive behaviour in themselves ; but
 endeavour to promote peace among others. These
 are the true children of the gospel. — Blessed are
 they who are ill-treated, reviled, and persecuted for
 the sake of religion. Thus of old the prophets were
 persecuted ; in whose reward, as well as sufferings,
 they shall partake.

You, who embrace my religion, like salt, shall
 purify a corrupt world. But you must first be pure
 yourselves.

11. It is rather probable, that these expressions, *ye are the salt of the earth*, and *ye are the light of the world*, apply to Christians in general,

14.15.16. yourselves. Like a city built upon a hill, you are conspicuous to all. You are the light of the world. Let that light shine for the benefit of others.

17. Do not however imagine, that my institutions are intended to overturn the law, and the prophets, which you have thus far been taught to reverence.

18. By no means. It is my business, and intention to complete, and fulfil every tittle of the moral, and ceremonial law : and he who hath observed both the

19. most religiously, is the best qualified to receive the

20. gospel. So far indeed am I from destroying the moral law : that I mean to exalt and perfect it. He

therefore

general, than to the preachers only of religion. *General expressions of the same kind occur in other parts of scripture. See Col. iv. 6. and Phil. ii. 15. — The figure here is exceedingly bold, Εὐαγγελισθὲν τοῖς ἀλλοις; if the salt be insatiated.* — The ancients used rock, or fossil salt, which was much more subject to impurities, than the salt we use. Mr. Maundrel very well illustrates this passage by the account he gives of the *valley of salt*, near Aleppo. “There is a small precipice, says he, occasioned by the continual taking away of the salt. In this you may discover the veins of it lying. I broke off a piece, which having been exposed to the sun, rain, and air, had entirely *lost its savour*; though it had the sparks, and particles of salt. The inner parts retained their savour.”

14. Sir Isaac Newton, and others, have supposed, that our blessed Saviour on this and other occasions, alluded to objects before him : and Mr. Maundrel speaks of a town, called *Saphet*, imagined to be the ancient *Bethuliah*, which was easily seen from what is called the *mount of the Beatitudes*.

16. It is probable, that in this passage, the *doctrines* of the gospel are meant by the *salt*; and the *example* of its professors, by the *city on a hill*, and the *candle on a candle stick*.

18. Κεραία, which is translated *tittle*, signifies the ornamental part of a letter, which was used, when Hebrew was elegantly written.

20. As far as we can judge from this, and the following passages, the Pharisees had greatly corrupted the spirit of the law; and taught, at least by their example, that its precepts extended only

therefore who shall take his measure of perfection, from the letter of the law, as taught by the Scribes and Pharisees, or from their glosses upon it, shall in no degree be qualified for my kingdom. The sixth commandment, for instance, hath been commonly limited by the Jewish doctors to murder: but my institution supposes every man to incur guilt, who, even in his thoughts, is at enmity with his neighbour. Be assured, therefore, that no religious services, accompanied with a malicious heart, can be acceptable to God. As it is an easier matter to make

21. 22.

23. 24.

25. 26.

only to outward actions — that a regard for the ceremonial part would excuse the moral — and that some important privileges were connected with a descent from Abraham. All these notions our Saviour refutes. — The hypocritical pretences of the Pharisees had however gained so much credit with the people, that it was proverbial among the Jews, *That if two men only should enter the kingdom of heaven, one of them would be a Scribe, and the other a Pharisee.* Great therefore must be the surprise of our Saviour's hearers, when they found these very persons marked out, of all others, as the least qualified to enter the kingdom of heaven.

21. The climax here seems to be this: If you are *angry* with your brother without a cause, it is wrong. If you proceed to *abuse* by calling him *raca* (a vain light fellow) it is worse: but if you go on to brand him *as a wicked man*, (which *fool* in the Jewish language signifies,) it is worst of all.

22. Philo (de Sacrif. 844.) observes, that when a man had injured his neighbour, and acknowledged the injury, he was *first to make restitution*, and then to present his sacrifice. — To this practice our Saviour seems to allude when he says, *Leave thy gift before the altar, and go thy way: first be reconciled to thy brother; and then come, and offer thy gift.* — The expression *hell-fire* alludes to the *valley of Hinnon*, where the Israelites formerly had offered their children to Moluc; and in our Saviour's time, burnt the bones of sacrifices, and other rubbish from the city. As there was almost a constant fire there, they thought it illustrative of hell.

up a quarrel at first, than when it is carried to extremity; so the dreadful consequences, that follow the breach of this commandment, are best prevented by rooting out at once every malicious tendency.—

27. Again, the Jewish doctors confine the seventh com-

28. mandment to the crime of adultery. But my institutions go farther. They set a guard upon the

29. 30. heart. The *impure thought*, when cherished, becomes

guilt: and every impurity, however natural and

constitutional it may be supposed, must be rooted

out; as it is surely better to give up the unlawful

propensities and pleasures of this life, than by indulg-

ing them to risk everlasting happiness in the next.

31. 32. Thus, also, in the matter of divorce, great liberty

hath been taken under the law. But my institution

forbids divorce on any account, except adultery: it

calls him an adulterer who puts away his wife, and

marries another; and her an adultress, who marries

33. after she is thus put away.—Again, the Jewish

doctor, glossing on the third commandment, enjoins

you religiously to perform whatever you have bound

34. 35. 36. yourself to by an oath. But my institution totally

37. forbids the use of oaths in common conversation,

either by the Creator, or by the creature; allowing

29. The word *σκανδαλον* properly signifies a *stumbling-block*. Our Saviour therefore considers every thing, that *obstructs religion*, as something *laid in it's way*.

32. See Mat. xix. 9. Mark x. 11. Luke xvi. 18.

37. Bowyer conjectures that this passage should be pointed thus: Ο ΧΟΡΩ^ς ^{υμων} ^{ναι}; ^{ναι}; ^υ; ^υ. Is your speech affirmative? Let it be affirmative. Is it negative? Let it be negative.

only a bare affirmation, or denial. — Thus again, 38. 39 40.
the law of retaliation demands *an eye for an eye, and* 41. 42.
a tooth for a tooth. But my institutions forbid this
rigour; and, on every occasion, prescribe a kind
and gentle behaviour — a willingness to give — a will-
ingness to forgive — and to part with something,
even of your just right, for the sake of peace. —
Among the glosses on the law, you have heard it 43.
said, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine*
enemy. My directions are different. Your enemy, 44. 45.
whoever he be, is the creature of that God, who 46. 47.
regards all mankind with an equal eye of tenderness 48.
and mercy. The Pharisee considers the kindness of
others to him, as the measure of his kindness to
them. Do you imitate the boundless mercies of that
gracious Father, *who maketh his sun to shine on the evil,*
and on the good; and sendeth rain on the just, and on
the unjust.

Devote yourself and all your actions to God; CHAP.
Sanctify every duty by referring it to him. If you VI.

1. 2. 3.

39. The passages which enjoin *turning the other cheek* — *giving the cloke* — and *going twice as far as was required*, are not certainly to be interpreted literally, for little good would arise from that; but are meant as descriptive of a Christian temper and disposition, which are of the highest value.

43. The latter part of this gloss, *Thou shalt hate thine enemy*, was founded on those peculiar severities, which God for particular reasons ordered against the Canaanites, &c. and which seem to have been originally intended by God as national punishments for sin. The Jews however conceived them, as authorizing a private animosity.

2. Alms were considered among the Pharisees as a mere *opus operatum*.

- 4 give alms through a motive of vanity; the praise of men is your reward. But if you seek for the approbation of God; give them secretly, and with a view
 5. 6. 7. 8. only to please him. — Thus again, if you imitate the hypocrite in your prayers; you shall receive only a hypocrite's reward, the praise of men. But the sincerity of your secret prayers shall meet the acceptance of God. — To the uprightness of your heart attend more than to the length of your petitions. God knows your wants: but he expects you to give him a test of your sincerity.
9. 10. In your prayers, begin with an acknowledgement of praise to your heavenly father. Let the whole race of mankind be the next object of your petitions — pray, that the kingdom of righteousness may overspread the world — and that men may live in obedience to its laws on earth, as the blessed angels
 11. do in heaven. With regard to your temporal wants, pray only for the necessities of life; or at least with
 12. entire submission to the will of God. — With regard to your spiritual wants, pray for the forgiveness of your sins: but be well assured, that you pray in the

6. *Thy Father, which is in secret.* These words with the omission of the particle *in*, before *secret*, which is omitted in some MSS. will be, *Pray in secret to thy Father.*

7. Perseverance in prayer is often recommended; so that these repetitions, and much speaking, must be something different. — As it may throw an advantageous light on this, and the following verse, with some people, to be informed how nearly Plato's ideas coincide with our Saviour's doctrine, I should recommend to their perusal the two last pages of Plato's second Alcibiades.

spirit

spirit of forgiveness to others. Intreat God to assist 13.
 you in passing through the temptations and dangers
 of this world: and conclude your petitions with ex-
 pressing your trust in his power and goodness to
 grant all you ask. — But I repeat to you, that you 14. 15.
 are by no means to expect forgiveness at God's
 hands, unless you forgive others, by rooting entirely
 out of your hearts all malicious and revengeful
 thoughts.

The same devotion to God, which ought to go- 16. 17. 18.
 vern your aims and your prayers, ought also to
 govern your religious austerities. Whatever of this
 kind you practice on a worldly motive, meets only
 a worldly reward. It is *devoting the action to God*,
 which sanctifies it in his sight.

Thus spiritualizing your minds, consider not your 19.
 worldly goods as your treasures. They are liable to
 many accidents. But consider the enjoyments of a 20.
 blessed futurity alone in this light; which are the
 only treasures not subject to change. And of this 21.
 be assured, that wherever your treasure is, your
 heart and it will always be together. — It is the 22.
 worldly mind which misleads you. When your sight 23.
 is clear, your motions are properly directed: but
 when it is impaired, you are bewildered. Just so
 the mind. Cleanse it from the love of earthly things,

13. As the article *ex* is added to *torment*, it rather denotes *the evil one*, than simply *evil*, as it stands in our translation. The anti-thesis also requires this sense. *Deliver us from the evil one* — that is, *from his dominion*; for *thine is the kingdom*. But our translators seem to have been misled by the vulgate.

- and it will of course be directed to heavenly. —
24. Besides, the earthly mind is utterly *inconsistent* with religion. It is impossible to devote yourself, at
25. the same time, to God and the world. — Be not therefore *solicitous* even about *necessary things*. That
26. God, who created you, will continue to preserve you. That hand which feedeth the fowls of the air,
27. will reach its protection to you. Without this protection, even the most anxious of your endeavours
28. 29. 30. would avail nothing. Consider who clothes the flowers of the field in all that splendour which no art can rival. Will he, think you, who arrays the lily, neglect you? Be not then solicitous about the things
31. of this life. Leave the anxious cares of this world to its children. Let it be your part to practise the
32. rules of religion: and your heavenly Father, who knoweth your wants, will properly supply them.
33. Let not the future therefore distress you: leave to-morrow to itself; and trouble not to-day with evils which belong not to it.
- 34.

27. Ηλικία here signifies more properly *age*, than *stature*; and *πυχς* is taken for a *short duration*. To add a cubit to a man's *stature*, is a great thing, which the sense rejects. See Wetstein.

30. *Into the oven*. In the East fuel is often so scarce, that the inhabitants burn dried grass. They want it chiefly to supply their ovens.

33. All these things shall be *added*. The mode of expression here leads us to consider the things of this world as thrown in, by way of *overplus* in a greater bargain; rather than as being of much value in themselves. And this is indeed the light in which we should learn to consider them.

34. No exposition can do justice to the original in the concluding verses of this chapter; but for the sake of uniformity, I am obliged to modernize them.

But

But however pure you may suppose yourselves, I CHAP. VII.
forbid all rash censures of others. The malicious, 1. 2.
detracting temper has little to expect from the fa- 3. 4. 5.
vour of God. Look rather at home; and try
whether you cannot find greater faults in your own
hearts, than in those of your neighbours. Correct
yourselves, therefore, before you presume to censure
others. And even in cases, where it may be proper 6.
to censure, be prudently reserved. Indiscreet ad- 7. 8.
vice injures both itself and the adviser. — But in
this, and in every thing else, have recourse to prayer,
and the assistance of God. He who prays earnestly,
may depend on being heard. With what attention 9. 10.
does the earthly father commonly listen to the request
of his child. And can you suppose that your hea- 11.
venly Father will be less attentive? — Learn also, 12.
from God's kindness to you, to be at all times kind
to your neighbour: and make it a rule in all cases,
to do to others whatever you might reasonably expect
them to do to you. In observing this rule, you fulfil the
law.

Thus the path which I have marked out for you, 13. 14.
is narrower than that in which the world commonly
walks. But consider the great point to which it
leads; and be not discouraged from pursuing it.

6. See Mat. x. 14. 16. Mark vi. 11. Luke ix. 5. and x.
11. Acts xiii. 51.

7. *Ask, seek, knock.* From these words, which form a climax,
we receive the same instruction to persevere in prayer, which we
do in the case of the widow, and the unjust judge, Luke xviii. 7.

15. Listen not to those false teachers, whose doctrines
 16. 17. 18. produce not a holy life. As the fruit distinguishes
 19. 20. the tree, so does a holy life the Christian. A good
 Christian will as certainly shew his doctrine by his
 holy life, as a good tree will produce good fruit :
 and that Christian, who does not shew himself in
 this way, is of no more worth than a tree which bears
 21. 22. 23. bad fruit. It is not professing the gospel, nor dis-
 playing your gifts and endowments, that will make
 you my disciples. Be your professions or your gifts
 what they may, if they are unaccompanied with
 good works, they belong not to my institution. —
 24. 25. He, therefore, who, having heard the gospel, con-
 forms his practice to it, resembles that prudent man,
 who builds his house upon a rock. The rains, and
 storms, and floods, may beat against it : but it is
 26. 27. founded in security ; and resists their force. While
 he, who leaves a good life out of his religion, for-
 gets the foundation, and raises his house on the sand.
 The storms and floods arise : it is ill-founded, and is
 instantly beaten down.
28. 29. Thus Jesus concluded his divine discourse : and
 his hearers were struck with admiration ; for they
 easily saw, that his preaching had a different tend-
 ency, and came accompanied with higher authority,
 than that of the Scribes.

19. Bowyer conjectures this verse to be an interpolation. It is properly introduced Mat. iii. 10. but here it certainly interrupts the argument, and the sense. It introduces the *punishment*, when the argument proceeds only on the *investigation*.

On

On his descending the hill, where he had been teaching the people, he was met by a leper; who acknowledging his divine power, begged his assistance with passionate exclamations. Jesus immediately embraced the opportunity, both of confirming his doctrines by a miracle, and of relieving the man's distress. He laid his hand therefore on the leper, and healing him with a word, ordered him not to speak of the matter; but to shew himself to the priests who were appointed by the law, as the proper judges of the reality of the cure.

As he entered Capernaum, a centurion belonging to a Roman garrison in the neighbourhood met him, and besought him to heal his servant, who was struck with a palsy. Jesus, desirous of giving the Jews an instance of faith in a person, whom they despised as a heathen, told the officer he would go home with him, and perform the cure. The cen-

CHAP.
VIII.

1. 2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

4. This caution, which our blessed Saviour generally shews, in ordering his miracles not to be divulged, is commonly attributed to his desire of avoiding offence. If he had been solicitous to draw multitudes of people about him, they might often have been inclined to popular tumult. It is true, he might have avoided any thing of this kind by his divine power; but it was certainly more exemplary to his followers, to use common, prudential means, than to have recourse, on all occasions, to a miracle. — For the same reason it seems probable, that he did not openly profess himself to be the Messiah; but rather used such language, and wrought such miracles, as might convince all *well-disposed* persons of this great truth. — The expression *for a testimony unto them*, means, that the priests pronouncing the cure to be real, would give testimony to the people, that it was so.

4. See the law of leprosy, Levit. xiii. 13. and xiv. 4.

turion,

8. turion, struck with a sense of his own inferiority, declared his unworthiness of such an honour; and desired Jesus to speak a word only at that distance, and he had no doubt of its effect. Even I, said he, 9. who am only an inferior officer in an army, can, by speaking to those under my command, execute what 10. orders I please, at a distance. Jesus, turning round, 11. 12. expressed his admiration at this instance of faith, which, he said, was greater than he had found even in Israel; intimating, at the same time, that this was an earnest of that great change which should speedily take place; when the heathen should be received 13. into the favour of God; and the Jews rejected for their infidelity. Then addressing himself to the centurion, and commending his faith, told him that his servant was already healed; which, on returning home, he found to be true.
14. At Capernaum, Jesus retired from the multitude into Peter's house; and finding his wife's mother in 15. a fever, he took her by the hand, and healed her instantly; so that she was able to attend them at supper.

13. *Simple faith*, which is often confounded with trust, and other christian graces, depends, no doubt, on evidence: but still it is greatly in a man's own power to search into evidence, and strengthen his faith. A man may neglect the strongest evidence, through self sufficiency, and it may make no impression upon him. Our Saviour therefore on this, and other occasions, seems to consider faith, in a great degree, in our own power; and lays that stress upon it, which in every religion, as well as the Christian, it deserves; for no religion can take possession of the consciences of men, unless a belief in it be first firmly established.

This

This miraculous cure being soon noised abroad, 16.
 numbers of sick and diseased people were brought to
 him in the evening, whom he immediately healed; 17.
 fulfilling, by these acts of mercy, as well as by his
 death, the prophecy of Isaiah, *Himself took our infir-*
mities, and bare our sicknesses. But finding the multi- 18.
 tude press upon him, and being spent with fatigue, he
 ordered his disciples to provide a boat to carry him
 over the lake.

On his embarking, he had an opportunity of 19. 20. 21.
 proving the insincerity of some, who pretended to 22.
 be his followers. They made zealous professions;
 but it appeared, that it was either on the expectation
 of some temporal advantage, or with the view of
 mixing more of the world with their religion, than
 it allowed. When they found that all their hopes
 were referred to a future life, they thought it prudent
 to retire.

Jesus therefore and his disciples embarked alone; 23. 24.
 but they had scarce gained the middle of the lake,
 when a violent gust of wind arose, and endangered
 the safety of the vessel. Jesus himself was asleep,
 taking that repose which he had so long wanted.
 The disciples, therefore, in great terror, awoke him, 25.
 imploring his assistance. Jesus first rebuked their want 26. 27.
 of confidence in him; and then gave them a new

17. Isa. liii. 4. . . 1 Pet. ii. 24.

22. *Let the dead bury their dead. Dead while she liveth — dead,
 and is alive again — dead in trespasses and sins — are all similar modes.*

instance of his miraculous power, by instantly calming the sea.

22. As he landed on the other side of the lake, in the country of the Gergesenes, two demoniacs met him, who frequented those solitary regions, in which the Jews commonly made their tombs. These men were so exceedingly fierce, that travellers durst not pass that road: yet, on seeing Jesus, the wicked agent that possessed them were so terrified, that they cried out; calling him by his name — expressing their dread of punishment — and beseeching him, if he cast them out of the men, to suffer them to enter into a herd of swine, which was feeding at a little distance,

28. This is the first instance, that occurs, of demoniacs; except, where they are mentioned, (v. 16,) in the aggregate. Some resolve all these appearances into ordinary distempers; but it seems rather a hardy expedient, and attended with greater difficulties than it removes. What is said against their reality is chiefly founded on their being very unlike any thing, which we meet with at present. But if we reason thus, we may deny, like the Sadducees, the existence of angels — we may deny all supernatural appearance of the divine presence — and the whole economy of the Jewish theocracy. — It seems safer, I think, and easier, to suppose (what indeed we have some grounds to believe from scripture) that the devil had, before the times of Christianity, at least greater *visible* power than he has now. Indeed without supposing this, we cannot easily get rid of many difficulties in *profane history* with regard to oracles; nor of the possessions, mentioned by Josephus and other writers, as existing among the Jews. And with regard to the present miracle, how are we to believe, that an *ordinary distemper* went from a man into a herd of swine? The very purpose of this miracle, for aught we know, might be to shew the power of the devil, and likewise the power of our Saviour over the devil. The exorcisms of those times, no doubt, were often juggles. This miracle shews our Saviour's act to be real.

29. *What have we to do with thee?* Better rendered, *what hast thou to do with us?*

Jesus

Jesus permitting them, the whole herd rushed violently down a precipice into the lake, and were destroyed. The keepers immediately flying into the city, and giving intelligence of what had been done, the whole body of the people came out to Jesus; and, probably terrified by his power, desired he

32.

33.

34.

35.

32. There is not one of the miracles of our blessed Saviour, against which the cavils of infidelity have been more generally, and perhaps more successfully, directed, than this. The usual answer is, that our Saviour in fact, only permitted the devils to enter the swine, but that if he had even authorized them, it was justifiable; for if the Jews were the proprietors of these animals, they deserved punishment for transgressing their own law; and if the Gentiles, they equally deserved it, for leading the Jews into temptation. — But I cannot say, I am satisfied with this answer. There is something in the whole transaction so contrary to the gentle spirit, both of the gospel, and it's founder, in destroying such a multitude of animals, and injuring their owners in so great a degree, that I should rather wait for the time, when this, and other difficult points, shall receive that solution, of which I have not the least doubt, they are fully capable. I am much of the opinion of honest Erasmus, who in his dedication to the works of Hilary, says, “We may talk of referring difficulties to the next general council; in my opinion, it would be better to refer them to that blessed time, when we shall see God face to face.” Dr. Doddridge concludes his account of this miracle, with these pleasing reflections. “From this remarkable story we have surely reason to adore the good providence of God, who restrains the malignant spirits of hell from spreading these desolations among men, and beasts, which would otherwise turn the earth into a wilderness. What matter of joy is it to reflect, that all their fury and rage is under a divine controul; and that they cannot hurt even the meanest animal, without permission from above?”

34. It seems indeed from their desiring him so humbly to depart out of their coasts, that they considered this miracle as a judgment upon them; and feared a greater, if he stayed, agreeably to that passage in Psalm cv. 38. *Egypt was glad at their departing, for they were afraid of them.* If the Gergesenes had not been afraid, they would not have intreated him, but would have forced him; or have attempted to punish him. St. Luke expressly says (viii. 27.) *they were taken with great fear*; which could only be the fear of some greater judgment.

would

CHA P. would leave their coasts. Seeing them therefore un-
 IX. prepared, at this time, to receive the gospel, he re-
 1. passed the lake.

2. On his arrival at Capernaum, a paralytic was brought to him, lying on a couch. Jesus observing that his faith was sufficient to make him a convert to
3. Christianity, told him, his sins were forgiven. This was matter of great offence to some of the Jewish doctors who stood by; though they did not care to
4. express it openly. Jesus, however, knowing their thoughts, rebuked their infidelity, after they had seen
5. so many miracles; and asked them, If they thought it required more power to forgive sin, than instantly
6. 7. to heal a bodily disorder? He then healed the man with a word; and bade them judge, from that instance, whether he had not authority also to
8. forgive sin. But whatever the Jewish doctors might think of Jesus, the people every where considered him as a prophet sent from God.
9. About this time, Jesus called Matthew, who was a tax-gatherer under the Roman government, to be
10. his disciple; and afterwards refreshing himself at his

2. This was agreeable to the whole tenor of the gospel, which offered forgiveness of all past sins to every convert, on his first sincerely embracing Christianity. This appears to have been the case of the thief on the cross.

6. The man is ordered to take up his bed; which he might very easily do, as the beds of those countries consisted of little more than a thin mattress beneath, and a coverlet above.

9. The text says, *he arose and followed him*. But there is no reason to suppose he did not make up his accounts and settle his business.

10. It is probable, Matthew might have invited them, in order to give them an opportunity of conversing with Jesus.

house,

house, many people of ordinary character, with whom Matthew had before commonly conversed, sat down at table with him. This seeming familiarity did not escape the Pharisees, who expressed their surprise to the disciples of Jesus, that their master should demean himself by keeping such company. Jesus, informed of their cavil, asked them, Whether the sick or the healthy had more need of a physician? And bade them distinguish, as their own scriptures taught them, between works of charity, and mere outward observances, which were the works they chiefly valued. My principal errand, added he, in this world, is to convert sinners.

At another time, the disciples of John coming to Jesus in somewhat of the same spirit, as if he were not sufficiently strict in outward observances, asked, Whence it was, that they, and the disciples of the Pharisees, were enjoined great austerities; while, among his disciples, they observed nothing of that kind practised? Jesus informed them, by an allusion to the ceremonies of a marriage, that his disciples were yet only in a state of probation — that their time

13. Hof. vi. 6.

16. It is said in the text, that which is put in to fill it up, taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse. Now if the old cloth signifies old prejudices, and the new cloth signifies true religion, the analogy does not hold; for the more religion removes our old prejudices, the better it will be. But the under parts of our Saviour's parables are necessarily to be criticised. See a note on Mat. xiii. 44.

17. *New sack in old bottles.* The ancients used to preserve their wine in skins and leathern bags, which were not very lasting, and when old, very improper to contain wine, in a state of fermentation, as new gutts and the like.

18. *Shewbread.*

of

of suffering and austerity should soon arrive — but that the strict doctrines he taught, could not be yet properly ingrafted on the old habits and prejudices, which they still retained.

18. While Jesus was thus discoursing with the disciples of John, a ruler of the synagogue came into the room, and, kneeling down before him, said, he was convinced, from his miracles, of the greatness of his power; and was come to implore his assistance: My daughter, added he, is now dead; but I am persuaded that you can raise her again to life. On this, Jesus and his disciples, leaving the company, went with him.

20. On their way, a woman, who had been twelve years afflicted with a flux of blood, and wished for a secret cure, taking advantage of the crowd about Jesus, privately touched his garment; persuaded, from what she had seen of his power, that she needed nothing farther to heal her disorder. Jesus, not willing that such an instance of faith should pass unobserved, turning round, told her, that her cure was the reward of her faith.

23. Jesus, by this time, approaching the ruler's house, found the people in great affliction, and singing la-

18. In every village, where there was a synagogue, ten men were constantly obliged to attend public worship; of whom three were called rulers.

20. She wished for a secret cure, as her disorder was a legal uncleanness. See Levit. xv. 19.

23. On a report, says Josephus, that I was dead, my friends hired minstrels (*αυλῆται*) to lead the lamentations: and Maimonides tell us, that the poorest Israelite would afford, at the burial of his wife, two pipes, and one lamenting woman.

mentations over the deceased, according to the custom of the country. On this, gently repressing their sorrow, he told them they should see only the common effects of sleep. At first, they were inclined to deride him; but they soon saw the young woman delivered in perfect health into the hands of her parents; and joined the whole country in their astonishment at so great a miracle.

As he left the ruler's house, two blind men, probably waiting for him, intreated his commpassion. Jesus, at all times inculcating the necessity of faith, asked them, Whether they firmly believed he was able to do what they desired? And putting their cure on this issue, he restored them both to sight. — His injunction, however, to keep the matter secret, was but ill observed by their overflowing gratitude.

About the same time, he healed a dumb man possessed with an evil spirit. The simplicity of the common people immediately acknowledged the power of God: but the pride of the Pharisees attributed the miracle to a confederacy with devils.

24. Our Saviour, in this passage, seems to allude to the triumph of Christianity over the grave, by calling *death, sleep*. He spoke the same language in the case of Lazarus. His disciples, after him, adopted the idea, of which we have many instances; *they who sleep in Jesus — many among you sleep — the first fruits of them that slept, &c.* The ancient Christians, still improving on this idea, used to call a church-yard, κοιμητηριον, a *sleeping-place*. Hence the word *Cemetery*.

35. Thus Jesus travelled through the country, preaching the gospel, and confirming the truth of it by miracles.
36. Great was the disposition of the common people to hear him. Wherever he went, they gathered round him in multitudes. Jesus, observing this, and knowing what blind guides they had to follow, bad his disciples pray to God to enable them, and all other ministers of the gospel, to discharge their duty faithfully in instructing the people.
37. 38.

CHAP. X.
 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. Soon after this, Jesus, calling his twelve apostles together (whose names were Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James the less, Thaddeus or Jude, Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot), gave them power to work miracles; and, sending them out to preach, thus instructed them.

6. Go not, said he, among the Gentiles, and Samaritans; but confine your ministry at present to the Jews. Explain the nature of the gospel to them;
7. and confirm your doctrine by miracles. Exercise
8. liberally

3. Very good reasons are given for supposing Bartholomew to be Nathaniel (see Stanhope's Ep. and Gosp. Vol. IV.). Thomas signifies a twin; so does Didymus. Jude is called Lebbeus, probably from Lebba, a town in Palestine.

4. Supposed rather the *Canite* from Cana in Galilee. — Others suppose from a Hebrew word, which signifies *zealous*.

8. The ancient Christians in their apologies, &c. lay great stress on Christ's *commissioning others* to perform the works which he performed himself. This, they said, shewed a divine power, which

liberally the divine power I give you. Freely communicate, what you so freely receive. And be not solicitous about making provision for your journey. Travel in your ordinary manner; and trust in providence for your support. The workman is worthy of his hire. Find out, in every town, the best disposed people, and with them remain. Bless the house you enter, and if your blessing find no acceptance there, it will at least return upon yourselves. Such places as receive you not, must be left to the judgment of God. They have had an offer of salvation, which Sodom and Gomorrha never had; and must therefore expect a severer question. — But, be assured, the opposition you shall meet, will be very great. Your harmless lives are ill opposed to the wickedness of the world. Use prudent caution,

9. 10.

11. 12.

13.

14.

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16.

17. 18. 19.

which no prophet ever shewed, or magician pretended to shew. Among the miracles, *raising the dead*, is one. But this is omitted by the other evangelists; and by St. Matthew also in some very ancient MSS.

10. Neither a coat, nor a staff is forbidden; only more than one of each — that is, the disciples are forbidden to take any thing superfluous. Thus this passage accords with Mark vi. 8.

13. Let *your peace*. The *imperative* here is put for the *future*. And in many passages, imperatives may be considered as prophetic expressions.

14. The passage in the original, *shake off the dust of your feet*, is well illustrated by a Jewish custom. The Jews were so attached to their own land, which they thought the only seat of holiness; that when they returned into it from any heathen country, they used to shake the dust from their feet, that they might not pollute the holy soil. The expression therefore in the original, which alludes to this custom, carries with it, I should suppose, no idea of a curse; but only signifies, that they, who rejected the gospel, were to be considered among the heathen.

17. The text says, they will *scourge you in the synagogues*. The Jewish synagogue was not only a place of worship, but a court of justice;

20. tion, therefore ; and notwithstanding all, you shall often be obliged to bear testimony to the truth at the hazard of your lives. You shall be punished ; and brought before the rulers of the earth : but in these cases, meditate not what answer you shall make. The spirit of God shall direct you. Only settle it in your minds, that this opposition shall be very great : for the prejudices of mankind will be superior to all the affections of nature. Brother shall league against brother, and father against child. Be not however discouraged ; but consider the great end of all your labours ; which perseverance shall certainly obtain. — Notwithstanding however I encourage you to bear persecution with fortitude, I mean not that you should invite it. From one city, retreat to another ; and yet the gospel shall hardly be preached through all the cities of Israel, before the destruction of the Jewish nation shall take place. —
24. 25. You must not then expect better treatment than I have experienced before you. I shall bear the reproaches of the world first ; and it must be your comfort to follow my example. Be not therefore discouraged from preaching publicly the doctrines I
26. 27. have committed to your charge. A time will come,
- 28.

justice ; where, as in our courts of justice, smaller punishments were sometimes inflicted ; see Luke xii. 11. Acts xxii. 19.

27. *That preach ye on the house tops*, says the text. The windows of an eastern house being secured, and shut up by trellis work ; the inhabitants, when they wished to see any thing in the street, or to say any thing to the people below, used to go to the top of the house, which was commonly a terrace with a low parapet.

when

when the uprightness of your hearts will be made manifest. And fear not those, whose utmost malice can touch only the body ; but fear him, whose power reaches the soul — whose Providence extends to the smallest parts of his creation ; and will certainly therefore make his chosen servants the object of his care. — Consider therefore the persecutions you undergo, as a test of your religion. Those only are my faithful disciples, who, amidst the reproaches and ill usage of the world, dare confess me, and maintain their profession, I repeat it to you, that the opposition between the gospel and the world shall be very great ; and you must expect to see enmity even among the members of the same family. — This too will be a test of men's fidelity to me. He who loves his earthly connections, more than he does me, is no more a disciple of the gospel ; than he, who shrinks from persecution. That man alone, in

29. *Are not two sparrows, says our Saviour, sold for a farthing ?* alluding probably to the sparrows, and other small birds, which were sold in the temple courts, for the purpose of sacrifice. See Levit. xiv. 49. The farthing was the Roman *as*, or the tenth part of the *denarius*, about three farthings of our money. One farthing might buy two sparrows, and two farthings five. See Luke xii. 6.

34. *Think not that I am come to send peace on earth ; I am not come to send peace, but a sword.* The effect of Christ's coming is here expressed, not the design of it.

38. There is something singular in the expression in the original, *take up his cross*. Why *cross* ? Nobody had yet any idea of a *crucifixion*. But the case seems to be this. Jesus intended soon to go to Jerusalem, where he was to suffer death. His mind, no doubt, was full of this event, which he foresaw in all its circumstances. The word *cross* therefore, in this place, may be called a *prophetic metaphor*. He repeats it Matt. xvi. 24.

40. 41. 42. reality saves his life, who saves it to eternity. — With these instructions I send you to preach the gospel ; and shall consider those, who receive you, as receiving me ; and as giving such an evidence of their regard for the gospel itself, as cannot fail to procure them its rewards.

CHAP.
XI.

Jesus, thus dismissing his disciples, went himself to preach among the towns in the neighbourhood.

1.

2. About this time, John the Baptist, who was still in prison, having probably long observed a jealousy subsisting among his followers against Jesus, and being desirous of removing it now at the close of his life ; and of giving them those exalted notions of the

3. Messiah, which he himself entertained, sent two of them to Jesus to inquire, whether he were the real

4. 5. Messiah ; or whether some other was to be still expected ? — Jesus, instead of answering John's disciples directly, performed many miracles before their eyes ; and bad them tell John what they had seen ;

6. adding by way of gentle rebuke to the inquiries, that they

42. The doctrine of this verse plainly is, that all our good works should be done, for the sake of God, and Christ. This is doing every thing *for the glory of God*.

2. See Matt. ix. 14. and Luke vii. 18.

5. The miracles performed were nearly those mentioned in Isaiah (xxxv. 5. 6.) ; so that our Saviour's answer was an appeal to *prophecy*, as well as *miracles*.

6. Some explain this passage, as if John, who had now finished his ministry, sent his two disciples to Jesus by way of obtaining a sort of authoritative, or official proof, if I may so call it, of his being the Messiah. — I should think this a good interpretation, if the sixth verse did not rather seem to point at the incredulity of the disciples.

they who took offence in the midst of such manifest means of conviction, lost sight of their real interest.

After they were gone, Jesus thus spoke to the people about John. It was not, said he, a trifling matter, or the expectation of seeing any worldly pomp, or parade, that carried such numbers of you into the desolate regions of the wilderness. You expected to see a prophet; and indeed you saw one of the greatest that ever appeared — one who was himself the subject of prophecy — the predicted forerunner of the Messiah. His office, as preparing the way for the gospel, gave him a superiority to all the prophets of the law; and yet it is inferior to the office of those teachers, who are immediately engaged in propagating the gospel itself. From the days of John, the gospel is offered not only to the Jews; but to all nations; and they, who were esteemed the most unworthy, shall be found to accept it with the greatest eagerness. Till his time the prophecies were unfulfilled. John pointed them to their proper object; and is that holy person, who, in the power and spirit of Elijah, was predicted to precede the Messiah. — This great truth Jesus particularly recommended to their serious attention.

7. 8.

9. 10.

11.

12.

13. 14.

15.

disciples. Others, though I think without much ground, imagine from the sixth and eleventh verses, that John, who might suppose Jesus would have delivered him from Herod, and was worn out by a long imprisonment, had himself begun to doubt.

14. Malachi iv. 5. is the prophecy here alluded to, on which the Jews laid great stress; and it was one of the Jewish reasons for rejecting Jesus, that Elijah had not appeared.

16. 17. In the mean time (added Jesus) the Jewish nation is strangely perverse. Every method of calling them to repentance, is rendered ineffectual by their obstinacy.
18. John's austerity hath been called madness : and my
19. behaviour, which is more open, and unreserved, hath been treated as disorderly. But wisdom, in the
20. 21. 22. end, will vindicate itself, — Here Jesus took an opportunity to exemplify what he had said, by mentioning some of those cities, in which he had chiefly performed his miracles. If those works, said he, which I wrote in Chorazen and Bethsaida, had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would, long ago, have repented. — Or, if Sodom had seen the miracles which Capernaum saw, it might have existed to this day. — At the last judgment therefore these cities of Israel shall experience a much severer treatment, than those of the heathen.
23. 24.
25. 26. Then Jesus breaking out into a prayer, thanked God that the gospel, though undiscoverable by worldly wisdom, and inaccessible to worldly tempers, was open to all those humble, sincere, and gentle spirits,
27. who wished to receive it. Your heavenly father, (said he, turning to the people,) who formed this great scheme for the salvation of men, hath intrusted the execution of it to me. No man therefore can

27. The original words, *no man knoweth the Son, but the Father*, certainly shews great mysteriousness in the nature and office of Christ ; and should check much of the impertinence of human explication.

understand this divine revelation ; but through me, Come then to me, all you who labour under the ^{28. 29. 30.} burden of sin, or of unavailing rites ; and I will give you rest. That lowliness of heart, which I teach, will ease you of many distresses. Take therefore my yoke upon you ; you will find it easy ; and my burden light.

Soon after this, a remarkable instance happened of ^{CHAP. XII.} that malice which Jesus had just been describing. — ^{1.} He was walking through a corn-field ; with his disciples ; who being hungry, rubbed out, and eat, some of the ears of corn. This the Pharisees observing, were greatly offended — not because the disciples had taken what belonged to another ; for they had done only what the law allowed — but because they had broken the sabbath ; on which day the thing happened. — ^{2.} Jesus reminded them of the case of David, and the shew-bread ; and likewise of the necessary ministrations of the priests in the temple ^{3. 4. 5.} on the sabbath. Besides, he told them, that his disciples at least were blameless, as acting under his au- ^{6. 7. 8.}

2. Deut. xxiii. 25. 15. 1 Sam. xxi. 6. 5. Numb. xxviii. 9.

7. Our Saviour, by placing the observance of the sabbath among the works of the law, is thought by some learned men to consider the sabbath as a Mosaic institution. But it is more generally conceived, from its being sanctified at the creation ; and strongly alluded to in the patriarchal history, that it was earlier than the law. — The determination, however, is of little consequence to Christians ; for all agree, that the sabbath lays a divine obligation on them. — *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.* It is agreeable to the genius of the Hebrew language, when one thing is forbidden, and another commanded, to mean only that the latter is to be preferred. See instances in Joel ii. 13. Matt. vi. 19, 20. Luke xii. 4, 5. John vi. 27.

thority

thority, which might dispense with the sabbath; adding, that they would have been less forward in their reproof, if they had understood the meaning of the expression, *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice*: that is, God lays the stress, rather on acts of piety, and charity, than on forms, and ceremonies.

9. 10. 11. Not long after, on a similar occasion, the Pharisees shewed an instance of the same temper. Jesus was teaching on the sabbath in a synagogue, where was a man with a withered hand. The Pharisees observing he was about to heal him, asked, with a malicious intention, whether it were lawful to do a work of that kind on the sabbath? Is there one among you, replied Jesus, so strict, as not to relieve
 12. his beast from a pit on the sabbath? And is it not equally allowable, to relieve a man in his distress?
 13. Then turning to the cripple, he bade him stretch out
 14. his hand, which was instantly restored. — The Pharisees, vexed and disappointed, and not daring to attack him openly because of the people, endeavoured in private to contrive his destruction.
15. Jesus in the mean time, knowing their malice, retired to another place; and great multitudes following him, he healed their sick; but ordered them
 16. not to make him known; thus fulfilling the prophecy

16. One thing in our blessed Saviour's conduct seems very evident, though not enough perhaps taken notice of; that in many of his actions, he seems to have intended merely to set an *example to others*; when obviously those actions appear to *terminate in himself*.
 Thus

phecy of Isaiah, which pointed out the *quietness* as 17.
 well as *mercy*, which accompanied all his actions.
Behold my servant whom I have chosen ;— my beloved, 18.
in whom my soul is well pleased ; I will pour my spirit
upon him, and he shall open the knowledge of truth to the
Gentiles. Quietness and peace shall mark his paths : 19.
he shall raise the fallen and afflicted, till truth at length 20.
shall universally triumph ; and all the Gentiles shall trust 21.
in his name.

Some time after, Jesus again drew on himself the 22.
 malice of the Pharisees, on the following occasion.
 He had healed a blind and dumb man, who had
 also been possessed with an evil spirit. This mira- 23.
 cle had been much celebrated ; and the people
 scrupled not, every where, to declare him to be the
 Messiah. The Pharisees hearing of it, came from 24.
 Jerusalem to quiet these rumours, by instilling into
 the people, that Jesus cast out devils by means of a
 confederacy with them. Jesus asked them, How 25.26.27.
 they

Thus when he ordered those, on whom he wrought miracles, to
 conceal the matter ; he probably meant only a lesson of humility.
 And in the present case, when he retired from the Pharisees, and
 wished to conceal himself from them, he meant it only perhaps
 as a lesson of prudence. He might have availed himself of his
 divine power, and at any time have eluded them by a miracle :
 but this would have been no lesson to his followers. See a note on
 Matt. viii. 4.

17. Isaiah xlii. 1.

20. Flax was used by the Jews in lamps. *Smoking flax* there-
 fore is equivalent to an *expiring lamp* ; and conveys the same idea
 as a *bruised reed*. — *Till he sent forth judgment unto victory*, i. e. till
 he establish his religion.

24. See Mark iii. 22.

27. This is a difficult passage. It seems to appear not only
 from Josephus and other Jewish writers, but also from the scrip-
 tures

they thought it possible for the devil to league against himself? Besides, said he, if I cast out devils through a combination with devils, through whom do your friends cast them out? If you do not suppose *them* to make such a confederacy; surely you carry your malice against *me* to a very unreasonable
 28. length by supposing me to do so. If then you are forced to allow, that I cast out devils by the power of God; you must also allow, that the religion I teach,
 29. comes from God. I have plainly shewn you, that I
 30. am stronger than the devil, by dispossessing him. As our aims therefore are wholly different, you may

tures themselves, that the Jews used sometimes to cast out devils by exorcism. If they did it by the power of God, their miracles seem to depreciate those of our Saviour. — But I suppose the case to be this. These exorcisms were similar to the ancient oracles; and were a sort of juggle, or confederacy, between men and evil spirits, which, before Christianity, we have much reason to believe was the case. At the same time, as the Delphic priest pretended to divine authority; so also did the Jewish exorcist. Our Saviour therefore, well knowing that the Pharisees would never allow the exorcist to derive his power from evil spirits, desires only that the same supposition may be made for him. — It is probable also, that our Saviour's dispossession of an evil spirit, and an exorcist's, might differ in this, that, in the former case, the evil spirits could never return; see Mark ix. 25. In the latter the cure might be temporary. — Others again are of opinion, that the Jewish exorcism was merely a *juggling attempt*. We find, in fact, that at least it sometimes failed, as in the case of Sceva's sons. (Acts xix. 13). And it seems probable, that if the exorcists could have acted by their own power, they would have made no attempts in the name of Christ; as we find they did. The excellent Antoninus says expressly, that he had learned to despise *all forcerers, and their charms, and their power of expelling demons*. See his Meditat. 3.

29. This verse, I think, may be fairly used as an argument against those who do not allow these to be real possessions.

30. The more obvious meaning of this verse, is, that *in Christ's kingdom there is no medium: we must either be the subjects, or the enemies of it*. But this sense does not so easily connect with the context.

judge

judge what mine is, by its opposition to his. Since 31. 32.
therefore the divine authority, by which I act, is so
fully apparent, he who through malice ascribes these
works to the devil, can have no stronger means of
conviction. He cannot be more hardened; and
therefore this is the most difficult of all sins to be
washed away by repentance, and pardon. Make 33. 34.
then the tree good, if you expect to have the fruit so.
Rectify your hearts. The tree, and its fruits, do not
more agree, than a man's heart, and his conversation.
The good heart as naturally throws out virtuous senti- 35.
ment, as the bad one does profaneness, and blas-
phemy. And be well assured, that your wicked words 36. 37.
shall be called into question, at the last judgment, with
the same strictness, as your wicked actions.

While Jesus was thus speaking, some of the Pharisees 38.
desired he would shew them a sign from heaven, as a
proof of his divine authority.

31. We cannot well suppose, considering the whole tenor of
the gospel, that there can be *any sin* which on repentance may
not be forgiven. This therefore seems only a strong way of ex-
pressing the difficulty of such repentance; and the impossibility of
forgiveness without it. Such an expression occurs Matt xix. 24.
*It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a
rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven;* that is, it is very difficult.
That the Pharisees were not beyond the reach of forgiveness on
their repentance, seems to be plain from ver. xli. where the re-
pentance of the men of Nineveh is held out to them for an ex-
ample.

36. The word *apeiros* (unworking) signifies *wicked*, according to
the Jewish idiom.

38. The expectation of the sign, which the Jews required, was
founded principally on Dan. vii. 13. in which the Son of man is
mentioned, as coming on the clouds of heaven; and reducing all
nations under his dominion.

You

39. You have had a sufficiency of signs already, said
 40. Jesus, to convince you. No farther sign shall be
 given you, except that of the prophet Jonas. As
 Jonas was restored to light, after he had been three
 days in the whale's belly; so shall the son of man be
 41. raised, after remaining three days in the grave. But
 as Jonas is a *type*, let the men of Nineveh be an *ex-*
ample to you. They repented at the preaching of
 Jonas, who performed no miracle among them: but
 you turn a deaf ear to one who teaches you under
 42. the manifest authority of God. The queen of Sheba
 took a long journey to hear the wisdom of Solo-
 mon; while you reject the voice of heavenly wis-
 43-44-45. dom itself, which even cries in your streets. — When
 an evil spirit, having been cast out of a man, re-

40. Here Jesus predicts his resurrection, which was the last and greatest sign he meant to give: and on which his apostles always, in their preaching, laid the greatest stress. To the Pharisees, it would not only be a great sign in itself; but would still be a greater sign, from its having been predicted. The wonderful circumstance too of Jonah's case, from its being thus a type of a great event, would appear in a new light. If an event so wonderful as the resurrection of Christ was predicted by any type, or sign, it could only be predicted by one, which was itself also of a wonderful nature.

42. Queen of *Sheba* or *Saba*, in Arabia Felix, which lies south of Judea. This country being bounded by the sea, is called the *uttermost part of the earth*.

43. *He walketh through dry places*, says the text: it should be, *it walketh through dry places* (desert places); that is, the evil spirit walketh, not the man. — One interpretation of this passage is, that the Jews, who were once the favourite people of God, and had had the evil spirit as it were, driven out of them by the law of Moses; had now become more impenitent, and more hardened, than the Gentiles themselves. — Others interpret it of the spirit of persecution, which, beginning in our Saviour's time, broke out afterwards with greater violence.

turns

turns to him again, accompanied with other evil spirits; the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. Such is the case of this wicked generation.

As Jesus was thus discoursing with the Pharisees, ^{46. 47.} his mother, and others of his relations, desired to speak with him. Jesus taking this opportunity, as he did all others, of giving his hearers an instructive lesson, said, These, indeed, are my natural relations; but I consider those chiefly as my relations, who do the will of God, and have a spiritual, rather than an earthly connection with me.

Soon after, as Jesus was teaching the people by the side of the lake, he found the crowd gathering round him. He therefore got into a boat, and pushing a little from the shore, placed himself so as to be commodiously heard; and thus delivered instructions to them under similitudes..

CHAP.
XIII.

1. 2.

3.

A husbandman, said he, sowing his grounds, dropped some of the seeds on the beaten path; where they found no soil; but lay exposed, and were soon picked up by birds. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, just covered with a slight surface of earth: they took root indeed; but having no depth, when the sun grew hot, they withered. Others again fell

4.

5. 6.

7.

2. If the shore were elevated, as it probably might be, and formed a kind of semicircular bay, the people might range themselves round it, as in an amphitheatre, and hear with great advantage.

among

- among weeds, which soon choked and destroyed them. But such as fell on good ground, properly prepared to receive them, flourished, and produced fruit in abundance. Having delivered this parable to the people, he recommended to each of them the particular application of it.
8. Here his disciples inquired, why he did not address himself more plainly to the people; and intimated, that the parable was not sufficiently plain, even to them.
9. To you, answered Jesus, I can explain the mysteries of the gospel with great openness; to them I cannot. Your sincerity enables you to receive more and more instruction: while their blindness, ignorance, and hardness of heart, shut them out from that knowledge which they might otherwise receive. I apply to them, therefore, in parables, that they may be, as it were, their own instructors — that they may see, without perceiving that they see — and hear, without knowing that they hear. For, as the prophet Isaiah says of them, They have hardened their hearts; they have shut their ears, and closed their eyes; so as to prevent as much as they can, my
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14-15.

13. Another sense of this passage may be, *that if the gospel had been preached plainly to them, they could not have understood it.* It follows, therefore, that it was better to preach it in parables; which might afterwards be a convincing proof, both to them and others, when they came to understand it more clearly.

15. This quotation, which our Saviour makes from Isaiah, appears at sight, as if God hardened the hearts of men, on purpose to prevent their conversion; but it is common for God to speak by his prophets, of events, that would fall out, in a manner as if he had enjoined them. See Bp. Lowth's note on Is. vi. 9.

drawing

drawing them to repentance. But your dispositions 16. 17.
are of a different kind : therefore you are blessed with
a revelation of those things, which patriarchs and pro-
phets have desired in vain to see and hear.

With regard to the parable of the sower, continued 18. 19:
Jesus, the beaten path represents those, whose hard,
impenitent hearts would not suffer the word to enter.
The shallow soil spread over a rock, holds out such, 20. 21.
as, on hearing the truth, receive it eagerly, and seem
in earnest ; but, persecution arising, like a scorching
sun, they fall away. Again, the weedy ground re- 22.
presents those, who endeavour to accommodate their
religion to the world : but the pleasures and cares of
life generally prevail, and choke the better part.
Lastly, the good soil is an emblem of those, in whom 23.
the gospel takes firm rooting ; and, having no ob-
struction, gives a copious produce.

Jesus still continuing his discourse to the people, 24.
illustrated the future state of the gospel under the
following similitude. — A husbandman, said he, 25.
sowed good seed in his field ; among which his ene-

23. The *wicked lives of Christians* are sometimes urged as an argument against Christianity ; but so unjustly, that, in fact, the *wicked lives of Christians* are an argument of *its truth*. Here is a parable, describing the future times of the gospel, (which may therefore be considered as prophetic.) from which *it seems to appear*, (though the underparts of a parable should not be interpreted too closely) that three parts out of four of mankind will reject its salutary influence.

24. St. Matthew represents the disciples as breaking in upon our Saviour's discourse to the people ; which he probably does with a view of placing the parable and the explanation of it together. But we find from St. Mark, that *Jesus was alone* when the disciples asked the explanation.

26. my scattered tares in the night. The mischief at first was unperceived; but the corn no sooner grew up, than the tares appeared also. The servants of the husbandman wished them to be weeded out. But he forbade it; saying, Let them alone at present. Let all be reaped together at harvest; and I will then order the reapers to bind the tares and the corn in separate bundles—the one to be burned, the other to be laid up in my granary.
27. 28. In another parable, Jesus illustrated the progress of the Christian religion: It is like a grain, said he, of mustard-seed, which when sown, is among the least of all seeds; but its growth is more prodigious than that of any other; inasmuch as it becomes a tree, and affords shelter even to the fowls of the air. —
29. 30. The same representation, carried somewhat farther, Jesus gave under another similitude. The gospel, said he, is like a small portion of leaven, which, being covered with a large quantity of meal, is not seen at first; but beginning to ferment, by degrees spreads over the whole mass.
31. 32. Thus Jesus instructed the people, as they were able to bear instruction; and thus fulfilled the prophecy of the Psalmist, *I will open my mouth in parables; I*

32. In eastern countries this plant grows to an enormous size.

33. This parable may be considered as a kind of prophecy, that the gospel should in time overspread the whole world; and though parables of this texture (as we have several of a prophetic cast) were obscure at first; yet on their completion, they certainly tend greatly to confirm the gospel.

34. See Mark iv. 33.

35. Ps. lxxviii. 2.

I will

will utter dark sayings of old. — Then dismissing the multitude, he retired into a house with his disciples, and, at their desire, explained to them the parable of the tares. 36.

By the sower, he told them, was meant Christ — the field was the world — the corn represented good Christians — the tares, sinners — the enemy was the devil — the harvest, the end of the world — and the reapers, the angels. As the tares, therefore, were gathered up and burnt; so, at the conclusion of all things, the angels should separate the good from the bad; and while these should be condemned to a place of punishment, those should be conveyed to regions of happiness. And let mankind, said he, seriously attend to these great truths! The more they attend to them, the more they shall find them the support of all their hopes. For the gospel, added he, is like treasure hid in a field. He that finds it, transported with joy, sells all he has to purchase so valuable a possession. It is like a gem of infinite price, which the merchant runs every risk to possess. And well may it be considered of infinite price; for on it de- 37.
38.
39.
40. 41.
42. 43.
44.
45. 46.
47. 48.
49. 50.

44. In the underparts of our Saviour's parables, there is sometimes the *appearance* of an immoral tendency; as in the commendation bestowed on the *unjust steward*. Here it seems against the principles of equity for a man to conceal from the possessor the unknown value of a field which he had accidentally discovered, that he might purchase it himself at an under-price. — But we want common sense only as a commentator on such passages as these. Common sense shews us at once, that the instruction is not meant to be conveyed in any of these *under parts* and *trivial circumstances*; but in the *general scope* only of the whole parable.

pend all your hopes and fears. It is that great net thrown into the sea, which incloses of every kind. When it is drawn on shore, a separation shall be made — the good shall be preserved, and the refuse destroyed. — Jesus then asked his disciples, if they
 51. 52. fully understood the meaning of all he had said? On their answering, they had; he bad them lay up then in their memory what they had heard, and imitate the prudent house-holder, who from his stores produces to his guests, according to their several conditions, such things as are best accommodated to each.

After this, Jesus leaving Capernaum, went to Nazareth; where, according to his usual custom, he
 53. 54. 55. taught in the synagogue. Here he was received in a
 56. 57. 58. manner very different from what he might have expected. His countrymen, who had known him from his youth, and were blinded entirely by his earthly connections, would not acknowledge his divine original. Whence hath he obtained, said they, this mighty wisdom? We are well acquainted with all his relations, and all the opportunities he hath had: we can never, therefore, believe that he can be the

55. *His brethren.* *Adnaq* has a more extensive sense. So among the Latins;

Frater erat, fraterna peto——

58. It is reasonable to believe, that our Saviour never performed a miracle but where he foresaw it might have a good effect in a religious light, either on the person on whom it was performed, or on the spectators; thus making one act of mercy lead to another.

mighty

mighty person he pretends to be. — Jesus told them, it was only in his own country that a prophet was received with dishonour : and finding the infidelity of the people of Nazareth such as could not at present be wrought on, he left them, after performing a few miracles among them.

By this time the fame of Jesus, having spread CHAP. XIV.
through every part of Judea, had reached the ears of 1. 2. 3. 4.
Herod ; who, under the terrors of a guilty conscience, 5.
declared Jesus could be no other than John the Baptist, whom he had beheaded, and who had arisen from the dead.

This wicked prince had long lived in a state of incest with Herodias, his brother Philip's wife ; for which John, with a proper freedom, had rebuked him. Herod, unable to bear what appeared to him

1. *Tetrarch* signifies a prince over a fourth part of a country. This Tetrarch was the son of Herod the Great ; who was succeeded by his three sons, Archelaus in Judæa ; and Herod and Philip in the other parts of his dominions. Thus Tacitus, *liberi Herodis tripartitâ revere*, Hist. lib. 5. cap. 9. — But still there is great difficulty about that *Philip*, who was Herodias's first husband ; as Josephus calls him *Herod*. Dr. Lardner shews (in the first vol. of his *Cred.*) that Herod the Great having several other sons, by different wives, who continued private persons, it was probably to one of them to whom Herodias was first married ; and his name (as Lardner shews from other similar instances) might be Philip Herod.

2. On comparing Matt. xvi. 6. with Mark viii. 15. it appears that Herod was a Sadducee ; and of course, that he disbelieved future state. We have here, therefore, an instance of (what is a very uncommon) a libertine's conscience flying in his face in despite of his principles.

so great an insult, had imprisoned John; and would have put him to death, had he not stood in awe of
 6. 7. 8. the people, who looked upon John as a prophet. It happened, however at a solemn feast, held on Herod's birth-day, that the daughter of Herodias danced before the king and his company, in a manner so engaging to Herod, that he promised with an oath to bestow on her whatever she should ask. So inviting an opportunity demanded consideration. She advised with her mother; who ordered her to ask the head
 9. 10. 11. of John the Baptist. The king, after expressing some concern for the necessity his oath had laid upon him, complied at length with the request. The head was brought, and presented to the daughter, who carried
 12. it to her mother. After the execution, the disciples of John were permitted to bury the corpse; and when they had discharged this office, they came to Jesus

10. Josephus also mentions the death of John the Baptist, (Antiq. B. XVIII. chap. vii.) His account differs from the evangelist's only in this, that the latter ascribes it to the *real cause*, the malice of Herodias; whereas the historian gives us the *pretence* which Herod used as a colour to his cruelty. He threw out, that John collected numbers of idle people in the wilderness; that he made himself popular; and became a dangerous man. But the historian speaks of him with as much respect as the evangelist does.

11. It is to this day a practice in the courts of Eastern princes, to produce the head of a criminal to evince his death.

12. It does not absolutely appear from the text, that the *disciples of John* looked on Jesus as their only master. It seems probable however from this and other passages; and so far as the probability goes, it is a good comment on the beginning of the eleventh chapter; as it shews that the design of John, on that occasion, was answered,

with

with the mournful account, looking on him now as their only master.

Soon after this, Jesus, embarking on the lake, 13. 14. failed along the shore, and landed in a solitary place with his disciples. But his motions could not be concealed; and great multitudes followed him by land, whom he graciously received, and healed the sick they brought with them. — As evening drew 15. on, his disciples put him in mind of the solitary place they were in; and of the difficulty the people might find in providing food, if they were not soon dismissed. Jesus inquired what provision they had; and 16. 17. 18. being informed they had five loaves and two fishes, 19. 20. 21. he ordered the people to sit down in ranks; and taking the bread and the fish, and giving thanks, he brake them in pieces, and gave portions of them to his disciples, to distribute among the people. Thus the whole multitude, consisting of five thousand men, besides women and children, were not only satisfied, but left fragments sufficient to fill twelve baskets. —

13. It does not appear that this intelligence, as the text seems to lead, was *the reason* of Jesus's retreating to a solitary place; as there is no intimation given of his apprehending any danger from Herod. Some connect the 13th verse with the 2d, and consider all the intervening verses in a parenthesis.

13. Πιζῆν has this meaning, rather than *on foot* as our translation has it. A person might travel πιζῆν, and yet either *on horse-back* or in a *carriage*.

Εἰ δέ τις αὐτοῦ, παρα τοῖς διφρῶ —

Odyf. γ. 325.

If you chuse to go *by land*, you may have a *chariot*.

22. Jesus then ordered his disciples to embark, and leave
 23. 24. him to dismiss the people; which having done, he
 enjoyed a short interval of private devotion.

25. Night was now come on, and the boat, in which
 the disciples had embarked, was struggling with a
 boisterous and adverse wind. Jesus, thinking this a
 proper opportunity to impress upon them, by a mi-
 racle, the great principle of faith, and of putting their

25. Our Saviour's miracles, I think, may be classed into three kinds — such as attended the solemnity of his birth and death; to which I add his resurrection and ascension — such as conveyed benefits to mankind; of which the bulk of his miracles consisted — and such as were mere appeals to the senses of men, without such *apparent* benefit — Of the miracles of this last class, we have very few instances. Only three, I think, can be mentioned — the curling of the fig-tree — the devils sent into the swine — and this of Jesus's walking on the sea: unless to these we add the money taken out of the fish's mouth. Wise reasons, no doubt, there were for all these miracles; though they are not so apparent to us. — With regard to the present miracle, it was a common eastern custom to instruct by *signs* or *actions*, as making the strongest impression. Thus Ahijah rent Jeroboam's mantle to denote the revolt of the tribes. Thus also the rejection of Saul was signified by the rending of Samuel's garment; and thus Agabus binding himself with Paul's girdle, predicted the imprisonment of that apostle. Numerous instances of the same kind might be produced. This of Jesus walking on the sea is one. His suffering Peter to leave the boat was well calculated at least as a test of his faith, and is a beautiful illustration of its effects. According to his faith, he found himself to *rise* or *sink*. — This miracle may also be considered as an instance of Jesus's *power over nature*. *Two feet walking on water*, was an Egyptian hieroglyphic to denote *impossibility*; and Job reckons it among the characteristics of the Almighty, *to tread upon the waves of the sea*; Job ix. 8. Thus also the Psalmist: *Thy way is in the sea; and thy paths in great waters, and thy footsteps are not known*. In the Revelation also of St. John, x. 2. *a mighty angel is represented setting one foot on the sea and the other on the land*. — If we consider the miracle before us in these lights, it receives additional dignity and weight. And in fact, his power over the sea was considered in so high a light, that it is mentioned by three of the Evangelists: Matt. viii. 27. — Mark iv. 41. — Luke viii. 25.

trust

trust in God (which was ever among his first instructions), went to them, walking on the surface of the lake. The disciples, not knowing him at first, through the shades of night, supposed it was a spirit. But Jesus, speaking to them, composed their fears. On this Peter, with more confidence than the rest, called out to Jesus for permission to come to him. Jesus giving him leave, he made the attempt : but seeing the water boisterous, his heart failed ; and feeling himself begin to sink, he cried out. Jesus, reaching his hand to him, intimated that his miscarriage was owing solely to his want of faith. The wind ceased as they entered the boat ; and all who were in it were so much struck with the miracle, that they fell down on their knees before Jesus, and acknowledged him to be the son of God.—Jesus, soon after, landed in Genesareth, where the inhabitants, hearing of his arrival, quickly dispersed intelligence through the country ; and multitudes of people flocking round him, begged only to touch the hem of his garment ; and none came without finding the expected relief.

The fame of Jesus was now so great, that the doctors of the Jewish law thought it expedient, if possible,

CHAP.
XV.
1.

33. The expression *they who were in the boat*, seems rather to imply the *boatmen* than the *disciples* ; which latter word is generally used when none else are meant.

36. If these were the Gergasenes, as some suppose, who desired (Matt. viii. 34.) that *he should depart from their coasts*, their faith seems, by this time, to have increased greatly.

1. Josephus tells us (Antiq. xviii. 10.) that the Pharisees appointed many strict observances which were not in the law ; and had

possible, to put a stop to it. The best ground, which they imagined they could take, was in the matter of traditions. If they could convince the people, that he despised that strictness which they themselves professed, they had no doubt but they should diminish his popularity. With this view a body of them came to him from Jerusalem; and told him, they had observed, with much surprise, that his disciples were brought up in the neglect of all those traditions which had been delivered to them by their forefathers——that for instance, it was an admirable security against every possible defilement to wash the hands constantly before a meal: but his disciples, they took notice, observed no such purification.

3. 4. Jesus asked them, how they could find fault with his disciples for neglecting those traditions which, in so many instances, contradicted the laws of God? The commandment, said he, enjoins you to reverence and assist your parents: but your traditions speak a different language. If, instead of assisting your parents with any part of your substance, you de-

had violent disputes with the Sadducees on subjects of this kind. The men of fashion, and free-thinkers, (the historian observes,) sided with the Sadducees; τῶν Φαρισαίων το πλῆθος συμμαχοῦντες, *the body of the people admired the Pharisees.*

2. Every thing *separated to a religious use*, among the Jews, was *ἅγιον*, *holy*. Every thing else was *κοινον*, *common*, profane, unholy. Thus as food was sanctified by prayer and thanksgiving, it was among the *ἅγια*; and therefore was not to be touched with unpurified hands.—The rabbins boast of a great martyr to this religious opinion, the rabbi Akiba; who being confined in prison, and having but a small quantity of water allowed, chose rather to die of thirst than to omit washing his hands.

dicare

licate it to the use of the temple, the divine command is at once superseded.—You hypocrites, examine the prophet's description, and see how far you may apply it to yourselves: *This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and boundeth me with their lips, while their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men* †. — Then speaking to the people as they stood round him, he told them they might be assured it was not what entered into the mouth which defiled a man, but what proceeded from the heart.

Soon after, Jesus being alone with his disciples, they told him, they understood that the Pharisees were grievously offended at what he had said to them.— Jesus bad them not be afraid of any consequences that should arise from their displeasure. Such plants, only, said he, as my heavenly father hath planted, shall be suffered to increase. Fear them not. Their pernicious doctrine, and all that are led by it, shall come to nothing.

Peter then intimating that he and his fellow disciples did not clearly understand what Jesus had said about defiling the man, desired a farther explanation of it, Jesus, expressing his surprise at the slowness of their understanding, bad them consider,

9. Isa. xxix. 13.

† The papists seem fond of applying some passages in favour of oral tradition, which we think have no reference to it; but this paragraph seems, in one sense at least, directly to apply.

that what *entered into* the man affected only the body, and could not possibly affect the heart. There could be no immorality therefore in any thing of that kind ; neither in eating with unwashed hands. — But what *proceeded from* the heart, wicked thoughts, and wicked actions, were the only things that could defile the man.

21. Jesus afterwards went into the country bordering on
 22. Tyre and Sidon, where a Canaanitish woman, a hea-
 then, coming to him, and addressing him by the name
 of the son of David, besought him to heal her
 23. daughter, who was possessed by an evil-spirit. Jesus at
 first taking no notice of her, his disciples desired him
 24. to dismiss her, as she clamoured after them. But he,
 intending she should discover that faith which he knew
 she possessed, told her his office and design led
 him only at present to assist the house of Israel.
 25. 26. On her still persisting to extort favour from him, he
 added, that it was not right to take what was thus
 27. designed for the children and give it to dogs. It
 was true, she replied ; but it could not injure the
 children if the dogs picked up the *scraps* from their
 28. table. An answer so clearly comprehending the

22. Sidon was one of the most ancient cities in the world, being mentioned in Genesis (xlix. 13.) Maundrel says it is now a heap of ruins, inhabited by fishermen, completing literally the prophecy of Ezekiel.

26. *Dog* was a common term by which the Jews used to denote the heathen. Our Saviour uses it here, not in the way of reproach, but only to assist his argument.

power

power and office of the Messiah, drew from Jesus the warmest approbation of her faith, together with an assurance that she should find her daughter perfectly recovered on her return.

From the borders of Tyre and Sidon, Jesus went again to the lake of Genesareth : and seeing the multitudes thronging round, with a number of sick and infirm people, he retired to a rising ground ; and healing their disorders, he raised in the multitude a spirit of praise and adoration to God for his mercies to them.

Then calling his disciples, he told them he had compassion on the multitude, as they had now been with him three days, and must have consumed their provision ; so that if he should send them home fasting, he feared the consequences. — The disciples remarked, as they had done before, the difficulty of supplying such a multitude with food in the wilderness. But Jesus finding they had seven loaves and a few small fishes, ordered the people to sit down ;

29.

32.

33.

34-35-36.
37.

33. The thoughtless infidelity of the disciples, after they had seen their master so lately feed five thousand people with five loaves and two fishes, would have been beyond all belief, if our Saviour himself had not, on all occasions, spoken of it in the most pointed terms ; *O ye of little faith — O faithless and perverse generation — If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed.* From these expressions we can conceive nothing, but such grossness as is here described. Indeed it was not till after our Saviour's death, and the descent of the Holy Ghost, that the disciples assumed those great and noble characters which strike us with such admiration. They were yet but *mere men* ; they became afterwards *inspired apostles*. — See the preface to the Acts of the Apostles.

and

and giving thanks, he distributed the bread and fish among them, through the hands of his disciples. After they were all satisfied, the vessels filled seven baskets; though the multitude consisted of more than
 38. four thousand people. He then dismissed them, and went himself into the country of Magdala.

CHAP.
XVI.

In this place, some of the Pharisees and Sadducees once more desired him to give them a sign from heaven, as a confirmation of his divine authority. You judge of fair weather and foul, said Jesus, by the appearance of the sky; is it not just as easy for you, if you were so disposed, to look into the prophets, and see in them the signs of the Messiah? — But, with a people so hardened, no signs avail: nor shall I give you any sign, but, as I told you, on a like occasion, the sign of the prophet Jonas.
 1. judge of fair weather and foul, said Jesus, by the appearance of the sky; is it not just as easy for you, if you were so disposed, to look into the prophets, and see in them the signs of the Messiah? — But, with a people so hardened, no signs avail: nor shall I give you any sign, but, as I told you, on a like occasion, the sign of the prophet Jonas.
 2. 3.
 4.
 5. 6 7. 8. 9. Jesus, having said this, left them abruptly; and
 10. 11. 12. taking boat with his disciples, passed over the lake. On their passage, alluding to the conversation he had just had, he bad them beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. They however, not well understanding him, and recollecting they had forgotten to take provision, thought he had alluded to that neglect. Jesus, having first rebuked their inattention and put them in mind of the two great miracles of multiplying provisions, which he had just wrought, explained his meaning to them, and shewed

them how the corrupt doctrines of the Pharisees and Sadducees might well be compared to leaven.

Jesus then went into the parts about Cefarea Philippi, and intending now to give his disciples a clearer view of the Messiah's kingdom, he began by asking them (as they had lately been travelling and teaching through the country) what opinion men in general had conceived of him? The disciples said, the opinions of men were various; some thought him John the Baptist — others Elijah — while many thought him Jeremiah, or some other of the prophets. Jesus proceeded to ask them their own sentiments about him. Peter with great vehemence cried out, he firmly believed him to be the Messiah, Jesus commending this confession of his faith, told him, the perfect knowledge of this great truth depended entirely on the revelation of God's will. This truth, added Jesus, alluding to

13. There were two places of the name of Cefarea. The first was a sea-port of note on the Mediterranean; which had been rebuilt by Herod the Great, and named in honour of Augustus Cæsar. This is the town so often mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. But the town here meant was an inland-town, built by Philip the Tetrarch, who named it Cefarea in honour of Tiberius Cæsar; and added his own name to it by way of distinction.

13. Bowyer conjectures, that the passage at the end of this verse should be pointed thus: *Whom do men say that I am? The son of man?*

14. The Jews had a notion that Jeremiah should at some time appear to recover the ark of the covenant, which he had hid. See 2 Macc. ii. 5.

18. Some interpreters consider *Peter himself* as the *rock* on which Christ should found his church; because he was the first teacher

- to Peter's name, is that great rock on which I mean to establish my church to the end of time.
19. 20. To you, my disciples, I give the power of unlocking, as it were, and opening the mysteries of the gospel; and inspired, as you shall be, by the Holy Ghost, whatever you shall declare to be my will on earth shall be confirmed in heaven. At the same time Jesus ordered his disciples not to mention, at present, to the people the great truth of his being the Messiah; desiring rather that they should themselves collect it from what they heard and saw †.
21. Jesus having now made a plain discovery of himself to his disciples, proceeded a step farther, and opened some of those great truths with regard to
22. his sufferings and death. But Peter, who had

teacher among the Gentiles. And indeed the words naturally give this sense: which is agreeable also to other scriptural expressions, as that of Ephes. ii. 20. *Ye are built upon the foundation of the apostles.* At the same time, the sense is more consistent when we consider Peter's confession as the rock; as if our Saviour had said (alluding to the custom of building castles and citadels on rocks), the great truth, that I am the Messiah, is the foundation of the Christian religion.—If the former sense be taken, it is however equally applicable to all the apostles: See Matt. xviii. 18. and John xx. 23.

19. This seems to be the sense of the words binding and loosing, which was a proverbial expression among the Jews; and certainly relates to things, not to persons, as the papists construe it. Things, not persons, are evidently alluded to in the parallel passage of Matthew (xviii. 18.) — *Giving the keys*, may be an allusion to a custom among the Jews of giving a key to their rabbies, when they were admitted to expound the scripture; or perhaps rather it may be an allusion to the prophetic style of conferring power: See Isa. xxii. 22. and Revel. iii. 7.

† See Mat. xi. 4. 5.

22. *Be it far from thee, Lord! Don't thou. Mercy on thee!*

gained

gained only a general notion of the Messiah's office, could not bear these humiliating ideas, and expressed himself with his usual warmth against them. This drew upon him a severe rebuke from Jesus, as a person darkened with worldly prejudices, which opposed the whole scheme of the gospel. 23.

Jesus proceeded to tell them, that it was not the Messiah alone who should be ill-treated by a wicked world, but that all his followers must expect the same treatment. The world indeed, said he, will become the great test of the sincerity of men.—The contention will lie between the indulgencies of their lives and the salvation of their souls: but they who think justly on this interesting subject will see the great difference between the two objects, and will think the happiness of the next world should not be risked for the sake of any enjoyments, or advantages, in this—always remembering the strict account they must give at the great day, when the son of man shall judge the world. And though the Messiah's kingdom, added he, which throws so strong a light on the next world, may appear now at a distance; yet you may be assured, that it shall speedily 24.
25.
26.
27.
28.

23. The word *Satan* signifies here an *enemy* or *opposer*.

28. This is a difficult passage. As the Messiah's coming is introduced here, immediately after mentioning the last judgment, many of the early Christians conceived these words to be a prediction of the speedy end of the world. When the event began to disprove that interpretation, it was next conceived that these words held out the destruction of Jerusalem. If they do, it is certainly rather abruptly introduced; and not so easy, I think, as the interpretation here given.

be established; and, in a great degree, even in the lifetime of some of you, who stand round me.

CHAP.
XVIII.

- Jesus having opened these things to his disciples, and given them so humiliating a view of the sufferings of the Messiah, thought it proper to exalt their hopes, by giving them also a foretaste of his glory. With this intention he led Peter, James, and John to the summit of a lofty mountain; where suddenly, as they were praying, his countenance assumed the brightness of the sun; and a splendid and glorious light invested him. On his right and left stood the two great prophets of the law, Moses and Elijah, in the same resplendent form, and entered into conversation with him. — The disciples were rather transported than terrified at this glorious vision; and Peter cried out, Lord! what happiness is this! let us endeavour to fix this ravishing scene, and erect tabernacles for its reception. — While he was speaking, an awful voice issuing from the cloud proclaimed, This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.
- Overpowered by the grandeur of the whole transaction, the disciples fell to the ground; on which

3. It is generally supposed that this vision was exhibited in the night, as St. Luke says, the disciples were *heavy with sleep*; and likewise, that they came down from the mountain *the next day*. If this was the case, the night would add greatly to the grandeur and resplendency of the vision.

5. The last words of this voice are supposed to allude to the predictions of Moses. Deut. xviii. 15.

Jesús reached out his hand to raise them. When they looked up, the vision was gone, and they saw Jesús standing with them alone as before.

While they descended the mountain, Jesús forbade them to mention what they had seen, till after his resurrection. — As they continued to descend, the disciples, musing on what they had seen and heard, and thinking this the greatest sign which Jesús had yet shewn of his being the Messiah, had still one scruple. The Jews universally believed that Elijah should precede the Messiah in some glorious manner; and as he had now appeared in such splendor, a publication of it, they thought, might tend to convince them. Jesús pointed out the mistaken notion the Jews had of that

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11. 12.

8. The faith of Peter is here represented exactly like the faith of meaner Christians—subject to various paroxysms. On Jesús's asking, what his opinion of him was? his faith appeared raised to the greatest height. When Jesús mentioned his death and sufferings, it sank: but on the sight of this glorious vision it rose again. Thus the apostles themselves, and meaner Christians of course, have occasion frequently to cry, *Lord, increase our faith!*

9. As our Saviour mentions his *transfiguration* in connection with his *resurrection*, we may well suppose it was intended to prefigure the glory that was to follow this latter event. It would then be a coincidence that would greatly confirm the hopes of his followers; though *before* his resurrection it would appear an unintelligible event. — Why Peter, James, and John were favoured on this and other occasions, we are not given to understand. One thing is obvious, that Matthew has shewn a great instance of his truth and simplicity in relating the preference of others to himself.

11. The expression, *shall come and restore all things*, (which is spoken in the future tense, after the death of John the Baptist,) has led some interpreters to conceive that Elijah should precede Christ's second coming as well as his first. The learned Joseph Mede was of this opinion; and Milton, who was Mede's fellow-collegian, probably took the idea from him.

— The great Fishbite, who on fiery wheels
Rode up to heaven, yet once again to come.

Par. Reg.

F 2

prophecy

prophecy which mentioned the coming of Elijah, and of that splendid restoration of things which they expected; and informed his disciples, that Elijah had already appeared — that he had already made preparation for the Messiah, and had suffered that treatment which the prophets had foretold — and that the treatment of the Messiah himself should be exactly the same. — This character of the prophetic Elijah easily led the disciples to conceive that he meant John the Baptist.

13. When they returned to the foot of the mountain, they found a great crowd; from which a person advancing, desired Jesus to have compassion on him. My son, said he, is grievously afflicted by an evil spirit, and I brought him to your disciples, hoping they would have healed him, but they could not. —
- 17 18 19. Jesus, rebuking their infidelity, immediately healed the
20. 21. young man.

20. Dr. Clark paraphrases the original thus: *If you had never so little faith in comparison; and indeed the Jews made use of the word mustard seed proverbially to express a little thing; as they did the phrase, remove a mountain, to express a great one. Yet I think theirs is a better interpretation, who suppose it alludes to the increasing nature of a grain of mustard-seed after it is sown. See Luke xvii. 5. in which the increasing nature of the seed, when sown, seems plainly alluded to.*

21. This verse affords an instance of the ingenuity of criticism. A learned writer (see Enquiry into Demon. p. 47.) instead of *ἡ προσευχή καὶ νηστεία*, by *prayer and fasting*; would read (though unauthorised) *ἡ συνεχὴς νηστεία*, by *constant fasting*, which he deemed the best cure for what he supposed an epileptic disorder. There might be some colour for this criticism, if the disciples had been inquiring about a *natural cure* of the disorder: but their question was, *Why could not we cast him out?* — Bowyer too, whose criticisms, I think, are often very refined, makes the same correction as the author of the Enquiry.

Afterwards,

Afterwards, when he was alone with his disciples, they inquired, why they could not perform the miracle? — Jesus told them, it was entirely owing to their want of faith. Faith, said he, like a grain of mustard seed sown in the earth, must be of an increasing nature. If your faith were of this kind, no miracle could exceed its power; but God does not allow such miracles as these to be wrought by any, whose hearts and affections are not purified and exalted by a thorough renunciation of the world, and an intercourse with heaven.

As they returned into Galilee, Jesus reminded his disciples again (as it was always his custom to repeat important lessons), that he should soon be delivered into the hands of his enemies, who should put him to death. At the same time he told them, that on the third day he should rise again. This promise, however, but ill understood by them at that time, did not much alleviate their sorrow.

As they entered Capernaum, they were met by a collector of the temple offerings; who asked Peter, whether

22. The last place where we find Jesus was at Cæsarea Philippi (Mat. xvi. 13.), which was a town on the borders of Iturea. From thence he went to Capernaum, through the upper Galilee, or *Galilee of the Gentiles*.

25. Our blessed Saviour's argument was, that if the kings of the earth did not receive *taxes* (*τὰν τῶν ἀρχόντων*) from their own families, but from their other subjects, he should be exempt from the *διδραχμα*, which was the *temple-offering*. See Exod. xxx. 13. 2 Chron. xxiv. 6. and the Antiq. of Josephus, lib. 18. cap. 10.

27. See a note on chap. xiv. 25. in which this miracle is mentioned among those of the lowest class. It was certainly, however, a miracle adapted to fishermen, and might tend greatly to increase their

whether his master paid that duty? Peter mentioned the matter to Jesus, who, alluding to his being the son of God, for whose temple the offering was demanded, declared his right of exemption: Nevertheless, said he, that we may not give offence, go to the lake, and in the mouth of the first fish you take, you shall find a piece of money sufficient to satisfy the demand.

CHAP. XVIII. The glorious vision that had just been displayed to the disciples, had not yet spiritualized their ideas.

1. They had still very low conceptions of Christ's kingdom; and had contentions among themselves who should be the greatest. — To dispel these animosities, Jesus took a child, and placing him before them, told them, that unless they purified their minds from all ambition and worldly thoughts, and became, in that respect, like children, they were by no means properly disposed to be members of his kingdom.
2. 3. The way, therefore, added he, to be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, is to endeavour to come as near this pattern as possible. These are the persons
4. whom I acknowledge as mine. He who receiveth
- 5.
- 6.

their faith. — Besides, it would be difficult to say how Jesus could with more propriety have obtained a supply. If he had created it on the spot, it might have had the appearance of a sort of legerdemain, — or it might have laid him open to the accusation of counterfeiting the current coin of the country.

2. This is another instance of the eastern mode of instructing by example: See a note on chap. xiv. 25.

6, *Better for him that a mill-stone, &c.* Drowning with a weight about the criminal's neck was customary; and became proverbial among the Jews for inevitable ruin.

such,

such, receiveth me : but he who purposely misleads, seduces, or prosecutes them, draws on himself a heavy judgment. Offence and falsehood will ever make a part of the trials of this world : but woe be to him who gives the offence or propagates the falsehood. Guard, therefore, against the temptations of the world, which are the principal causes of these mischiefs. Though its pleasures and vanities may be as dear to you as a hand or an eye, yet part with them freely, if you have any desire to receive the blessings of the gospel. And let it be your constant care to encourage, and draw to my fold, these innocent and sincere searchers after truth. Of such gentle spirits consist the blessed inhabitants of heaven, whose souls the son of man came to redeem. As a shepherd looks after his straying flock, and receives more joy from a lost sheep recovered, than from those that were safe ; so your heavenly father receives his straying children, and enjoins all the ministers of his gospel to recover them to his fold. — And even after they become your brethren be not too severe. You must use many means of exhortation with an offender, public and private, before you can justify yourselves in giving him up. But in the manner of treating

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15. 16. 17.

18. 19. 20.

10. The words of the text, *their angels do always behold the face of my father*, may bear another very good sense ; intimating (in a Jewish mode of expression) that they are under the peculiar care of God's holy ministers ; agreeably to the passage of St. Paul (Heb. i. 14.) *are they not ministering spirits sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation ?*

19. See Mat. xvi. 19.

19. 20. This seems clearly to relate to the miraculous interposition of heaven in the affairs of the infant church.

offenders, and other matters relating to the government of the church, such particular ordinances as you make under my general instructions shall be established : and in all difficult cases be assured, that frequent prayer to God will influence his holy spirit to direct your consultations.

21. What Jesus had been saying with regard to *offences*, drew Peter to put a case to his master, with regard to

22. the forgiveness of *injuries*. To what extent, said he, are we to carry this duty ? It has no limits, said Jesus. However often you are injured, if penitence follow the offence, a Christian is *always* bound to for-

23.24.25. give. At his own peril he withholds his forgiveness.

26.27.28. ——— Jesus then gave his disciples a plain representation

29.30.31. of God's dealings with man in this matter in the fol-

32.33.34. lowing parable.
35.

A master, said he, calling his servants to an account, and finding one who owed him much more than he could possibly pay, ordered him and his family to be sold, as the law allowed, in part of pay-

24. 28. If we suppose the ten thousand talents which the servant owed his master were golden talents, the sum would arise to seventy two millions of our money. And if by the hundred pence are meant, as is probable, an hundred Roman denarii, the amount of them is *3l. 2s. 6d.* This calculation, however, though the talents were silver, shews our Saviour's opinion of the disparity between the offences which we commit against God, and those which we commit against each other.

34. Some commentators, to solve the seeming injustice of the master in *reclaiming* a debt which he had formally *forgiven*, explain the conclusion of the 27th verse, as if the master had only delayed the exaction of the debt, which was all the servant required. But this circumstance does not at all concern the main point of the parable, to which only we need attend. See a note on Mat. xiii. 44.

ment,

ment. The man, falling on his knees, begged only a respite. His master, pitying his wretched situation, forgave him. Yet this very man, going out, from his master's presence, and finding a fellow-servant who owed him only a trifling sum, treated him with violence; and, notwithstanding all his entreaties, threw him into prison. The matter presently came to his master's ears, who calling the ungrateful servant, after a severe expostulation imprisoned him, till his own immense debt should be discharged. — Such, added Jesus, is the manner in which God will treat those who indulge an implacable hatred against their brethren.

After this, Jesus went from Gallilee into Judea, where he was attended, as usual, with a multitude of people whose disorders he healed.

CHAP.
XIX.

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3.

Here some of the Pharisees came to him, inquiring, with insidious intention, whether it were lawful for a man to put away his wife for any cause he pleased? Jesus reminded them of the original law of marriage at the creation, and of the indissoluble union which it implied. They asked, why Moses then allowed divorces on various pretences? Jesus answered, that Moses allowed them to pre-

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3. The insidious intention of the Pharisees seems to have consisted in their reducing Jesus to the dilemma of denying his own avowed doctrine (Mat. v. 31.) on one hand, or of contradicting the law of Moses (Deut. xxiv. 12.) on the other; which the glosses of their rabbies made to allow great liberties in the matter of divorce.

9. went worse consequences; but that God Almighty's law was still more ancient; and that in fact, whoever divorced his wife, except for adultery, and married another, was an adulterer; and whoever married a woman thus put away, was an adulterer likewise. — The disciples pondering on what Jesus had said, told him, they thought if that were the case, it were better to abstain entirely from marriage. — Jesus replied, the necessities of the world were such, that men could not generally abstain: but when wise and good reasons intervened, they had a choice.

13. 14. 15. As they were speaking, some people, through a great opinion of Jesus's holiness, brought young children to him, desiring he would lay his hands on them and bless them. The disciples rather discountenancing this as an unseasonable interruption, Jesus interfered, and calling the children to him, took them in his arms and blessed them. He then proposed them to the people, as he had done to his disciples a little before †, as patterns of that innocence and purity which he required in those who were converts to the gospel.

9. Milton, who put away his wife for another cause, endeavours to justify himself by a singular interpretation of this text, which would open great latitude — *except for adultery, says he, or any thing which would be to the husband as grievous and intolerable as adultery.*

12. See 1 Cor. vii. 1.

† See Matt. xviii. 2.

Jesus

Jesus soon afterwards was met by a young man, 16.
 who, accosting him under the title of *good master*, de-
 sired to know what he was to do to obtain eternal 17.
 happiness? Jesus observing, that by this address,
 which belonged only to God, he seemed to acknow-
 ledge him to be the Messiah, told him, that the way 18.
 to obtain eternal life was to keep the command- 19.
 ments. The young man desired to know which of
 the commandments? Jesus mentioned several; all
 of which the other, with great promptness, declared 20.
 he had observed from his youth. Jesus then told him 21.
 he would put his religion to the test. You have
 acknowledged me, said he, to be the Messiah;
 let me now see the strength of your faith. Give

18. Some commentators have wished that our Saviour had been more ample in his advice to the young man who inquired *the way to eternal life*. He gives him no instruction with regard to faith, to the love of God, or purifying his affections. He prohibits only a few gross crimes, and orders him to honour his parents; for the precept of *loving his neighbour* is suspected by many, particularly by Origen, to be interpolated; both as it is not one of the commandments, and as it is not mentioned in the parallel places of Mark (x. 19.) and Luke (xviii. 20.). To obviate this objection, it must be remembered what is the scope and aim of the relation before us. This forward young man is not introduced here with a view to be instructed in the truths of religion; but merely as an example, to shew how an attachment to the world sets our principles and practice at variance. Nor did it signify giving him any of the purer doctrines of the gospel, till he had shewn that he had received the first great principle of it; that of faith in Jesus as his *master*, whom he plainly seemed to acknowledge as the *Messiah*. Some commentators, indeed, suppose the young man did not acknowledge Jesus to be the Messiah; and that Jesus for this reason meant to rebuke him, for calling him *good master*: but the progress of the narrative seems to require the interpretation here given; for it was surely unreasonable to expect the young man should sell all he had and give it to the poor, and then follow a person of whose pretensions he knew nothing.

what

- what you have to the poor; trust God for a treasure
 22. in heaven, and follow me. — The young man, not prepared for such a trial, retired in confusion; for he was very rich.
23. 24. Jesus observed to his disciples, as the young man departed, how very opposite the things of this world were to those of the next: You see, said he, how almost impossible it is for a rich man to be a convert
 25. to the gospel. — The disciples seemed touched with the perilous state of the salvation of mankind; as all
 26. people had more or less of this world's goods. But Jesus looking on them with an eye of tenderness, said, I speak of those only who, like this young man, place their happiness in their wealth. They who trust in God, however rich, may, through his divine assistance, overcome the world.
27. Here Peter, in the name of himself and his brethren, declared they had left all for the sake of their
 28. 29. mastery, and asked what their reward should be? Jesus

24. Some for καμῖλον read καμῖλον, which makes the sense run, It is easier for a camel to go, &c. — But I rather suppose the common reading right: for a similar expression occurs in the Talmud: "No elephant enters by the eye of a needle."

26. See Mar. x. 24.

28. *You shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.* As this was spoken to the twelve, we cannot suppose it could be meant in its literal sense of Judas: and St. Paul particularly speaks of himself as expecting future judgment: 1 Cor. iv. 4. and again Rom. xiv. 10. In the Hebrew, *to judge* signifies *to govern*. *Jephtha judged Israel.* Judges xii. 7. *Make us a king to judge us.* 1 Sam. viii. 5. The phrase therefore, as some suppose, signifies only that the apostles should rule the early Christian church. — After all, it may be only an eastern mode of expressing dignity and power.

told

told

told them, their reward should be proportionally great; and in general assured them, that whoever sat loose to the things of the world for the sake of religion should be recompensed abundantly in this life, and everlastingly rewarded in a life to come.— But many, he added, who seemed to be among the most distinguished, are, in fact, the least. The Jews, particularly, though the first-called and most favoured people, would reject the offers which God designed them. God's equity, therefore, said he, in holding out these blessings to the Gentiles, may be thus illustrated.

30.

CHAP.
XX.

1. 2. 3. 4.
5. 6. 7. 8.
9. 10. 11.
12. 13. 14.
15. 16.

A husbandman went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard, with whom he agreed at the price of the country. Afterwards, at different times, and even at a late hour, he went out; and finding others standing idle, because they had no offer of employment, he sent them also into his vineyard. In the evening they were called together, and all received the same wages. But they who had been sent into the vineyard in the morning represented as a hard case, their having received no more than those who had wrought only a short evening-hour. On this, the master of the vineyard gave them a severe rebuke: My friends, said he, I have done you no wrong. Have you not received the price for which we agreed? Take it, therefore, and be content.

1. This parable is supposed to be taken from the Jerusalem Talmud, only differently applied. It is very evident that it was our Saviour's method, on all occasions, to teach by such proverbs, parables, and images as were the most familiar.

Have I not power to choose the objects of my own bounty? Are my kind intentions to be restrained by your narrow opinions? — Thus, added Jesus, God Almighty grants the Gentiles the same favours which he had granted the Jews, if they obey his will as soon as they are called. But among such numbers as have received this gracious call, how few are there who have the wisdom to accept it †!

- 17, 18, 19. As Jesus was now approaching Jerusalem, he thought it proper, a third time, to put his disciples in mind of his sufferings and death; and opened this great event still more plainly to them by adding some new circumstances, particularly that he should be delivered into the hands of the Gentiles; but concluded with an assurance that he should rise again on the third day.
- 20, 21. Their conceptions, however, of what he meant were still so very low, that the mother of two of them, James and John, hearing of the resurrection, and conceiving it to be some great event of worldly felicity, came to him with her sons, to desire

† As our Saviour's parables have frequently a double view, this parable seems not only to illustrate the case of the Jews and Gentiles, but the case of all individuals of every nation whom God accepts, according to the improvement of the opportunities they have had.

19. This was very remarkable. It all along appeared that the intention of the chief priests led to private assassination, or stoning Jesus in a tumultuary manner. But he now informed his disciples of what never entered into any body's head — *that he should be delivered to the Romans*. — Thus this great event was brought about, by the enemies of the gospel, in such a way as to confirm the truth of it in the strongest manner. *All this was done that the scriptures might be fulfilled.*

a dif-

a distinguished place for them in that kingdom, whatever it should be, which he was about to establish. Jesus told her she knew not what she asked — that she did not understand the nature of his kingdom — that it did not lead to worldly pomp and glory, but to sufferings and death — and though her sons might and certainly should follow his painful steps, yet seats of distinguished eminence in his kingdom were not to be given through favour or partiality, but to those only whom God should see properly prepared for them. 22. 23.

At these ambitious views of the two brothers, the rest of the disciples, not wholly devoid of the same ideas themselves, took offence. — Jesus observing the heart-burnings which were thus rising among them, called them together, and told them these were notions which belonged only to the ambitious rulers of this world, not to the disciples of the gospel. My disciples, said he, must have humble hearts in which no ambitious thoughts can harbour. They must endeavour to be the greatest, by considering themselves as the least. They must 24. 25. 26. 27.

24. There cannot be a greater instance of self-deceit than this passage affords. In the 27th verse of the last chapter, Peter mentioned his having giving up every thing for the sake of the gospel; and no doubt believed he spoke with great sincerity. It appears, however, both from his being angry at James and John, and likewise from the whole turn of our Saviour's answer, that there was still a spirit of ambition about him; and that he had still a confused idea of receiving some great *temporal advantage* from his attachment to his master. If such self-delusion could enter the simplicity of an apostle's heart, with how much care ought we to guard against it!

condescend

condescend to be the lowest on earth, before they can expect to be among the highest in heaven.

28. They must imitate their master, who came into the world not to be received with pomp, but to spend his life in sufferings, and finally to lay it down as a ransom for mankind.

29. Jesus, still in his road to Jerusalem, by this time had arrived at Jericho, from which town a great
30. multitude followed him. In the road sat two blind men, who hearing that he was in the crowd, called out to him by the name of the son of David, and intreated him to have mercy on them. This loud request they continued, though the people rebuked
31. their importunity. Jesus, calling them to him, asked
32. what mercy they wished to receive? They answered,
33. the recovery of their sight. On this he touched their
34. eyes, and they immediately saw clearly, and joined the crowd that attended him.

CHAP. Soon after Jesus arrived at Bethphage, a town
XXI. situated under the mount of Olives, about two miles
1.2.3.4.5. from

29. Jericho was the second city in Palestine: it was seated under hills, in a plain which, for fruitfulness, exceeded every part of the holy land. Josephus calls it *Βουχάριον*, a heavenly country.

5. Zech. ix. 9. — Most of the prophecies of our blessed Saviour were fulfilled by the intervention of other people, without his own concurrence. But this was fulfilled, says the objector, by himself; and certainly there is no great difficulty in fulfilling a prophecy in that way. — The objector must consider, that the chief completion of the prophecy lay in the great concurrence of other people, which was necessary to make up the triumph;

from Jerusalem. From hence he sent two of his 6. 7. 8. 9. disciples to a neighbouring village, describing in what circumstances they should find an ass with her colt; and instructing them what to say to the owner if he should offer to prevent their bringing them. The disciples, following their instructions, laid their clothes on the colt, and set Jesus upon it; while the people, spreading their garments, and strewing leaves and sprigs in the way, attended him with a song of triumph, crying, Hosannah to the son of David, blessed is he that cometh in the name of

triumph; so that the prophecy could not have been fulfilled by himself alone. The great credit therefore of Jesus assembled the multitude in a manner which no *other* person could have done. — This whole transaction receives additional force and propriety, when we consider that it was the realizing of a typical ceremony, (another mode of prophecy,) which was always performed at the feast of tabernacles. The people at that time carried branches of palm and other trees, (see Levit. xxiii. 40.) with which they used to walk in procession, crying *Hosannah*; that is, *save, I beseech thee*. These words were always applied by the Jewish rabbies to the Messiah. The people therefore being convinced that Jesus was the Messiah, applied this ceremony directly to him: and indeed it is evident throughout, that the people were all along disposed to receive him as the Messiah: which they could only be from the miracles which they saw him work, and the prophetic characters which they saw him fulfil. — Horses were in little use among the Jews, except in war. All the old patriarchs and prophets rode on asses. Deut. xvii. 16; and Judg. v. 10, &c.

8. It was usual to spread garments under great personages, and especially at the inauguration of kings. "*Then they basted, and took every man his garment, and put it under him,* (that is, under Jehu,) *at the top of the stairs; and blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu is king.* 2 Kings ix. 13. — *Κλαδος*, which is rendered a *branch*, signifies properly a *slight twig*, or the first year's shoot, which may easily be broken. St. Mark (xi. 8.) uses the word *τρούβανος*, which has nearly the same meaning. — *Branches from the trees*, would entangle passengers.

the Lord; Hofannah in the highest. Thus was fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah, *Tell ye the daughter of Sion, behold thy king cometh unto thee meek and lowly, sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.*

10. In this manner Jesus entering Jerusalem, the whole city was in commotion, every one inquiring who he was? To which inquiry voices from every
 11. part of the crowd were heard, This is Jesus, the
 12. prophet of Nazareth of Galilee †. — At the temple Jesus alighted, and, passing through the outward court, was disgusted at seeing it occupied by buyers and
 and

† This triumphant entry of our Saviour into Jerusalem was so totally different from every action of his humble life, that there must have been some very particular reason for it. It may be conjectured that as Jesus was now about to finish the great scheme of the redemption of mankind by his death and resurrection, he might chuse to make those wonderful events as public as possible, that all mankind might be witnesses of them. For the same reason it may be supposed, our blessed Saviour chose to suffer at the time of the passover, not only to fulfil more appositely the type of the paschal lamb; but also because Jerusalem was then crowded with strangers, to whom this event still farther notified him.

12. These people fold oxen, sheep, doves, and other things necessary for the sacrifices of the temple, on the pretence of furnishing a ready convenience to the people. — The money-changer was necessary to convert into current coin the several kinds of foreign money which were brought by profelytes from various parts of the empire. But as our Saviour thought all this traffic was improperly carried on within the precincts of the temple, and also dishonestly conducted, he judged it right to put a stop to it. — Some interpreters suppose that no *miracle* was here intended; but that the buyers and sellers durst not resist Jesus, then at the head of so powerful a body of people. — I am not fond of representing our blessed Saviour in any light in which violence is concerned. I think it presents a grander idea to suppose that Jesus awed them into submission by the dignity of his person and behaviour. It is not uncommon to see a multitude struck with awe on the appearance of a person whom they respect.

We

and sellers; all of whom he drove out; saying, It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves. 13.

The fame of his entrance into Jerusalem having soon spread through the city, numbers of sick people were brought to him in the temple, as had been usual in all other places; and, with the same kindness and compassion, he healed them. 14.

The Scribes and chief priests, who had treated Jesus with so much severity at a distance, could not be supposed to be indifferent to these uncommon proceedings in the very place of their jurisdiction. They assembled, therefore, about him; and not daring to apply any direct force, asked him, Whether he countenanced all that noise and clamour which the people and children made around him? Jesus, reminding them of a passage in the Psalms, *Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise*, left them to apply it; and retired to Bethany, a village about a mile from Jerusalem. 15. 16. 17.

We have a celebrated instance of it in our own history in the case of Richard II. who, though a mere youth, by a single effort of his own, awed into submission an armed and enraged multitude. Much more may we suppose the divine appearance of Jesus might awe a venal set of people, convicted by their own consciences; and who we have no reason to believe were very numerous. We know that the divine appearance and dignity of Jesus had that effect, soon after, even on a band of armed soldiers: (John xviii. 6.) We know also that Jesus himself, on another occasion, disclaimed all human assistance: *If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.* John xviii. 36.

13. See Isa. lvi. 7. Jer. vii. 11.

16. Ps. viii. 2.

18. 19. In the morning he returned to the city; and, in his way, took an opportunity, from a barren fig-tree, which stood near the road, to give his disciples, at this approaching time of trial, a visible instance of the nature of faith. On his finding the fig-tree flourishing in appearance, but without fruit, he forbid it ever
20. 21. 22. again to bear any; and the disciples expressing their surprise on seeing it wither, Jesus exhorted them to consider what they had seen as an emblem of barren faith: implying, that when faith was accompanied with works, as the tree should be with fruit, there was nothing so difficult which it might not effect †; as there was nothing more efficacious with God, than prayer founded on faith.

23. As soon as Jesus entered Jerusalem, he went into the temple, and began to teach the people. But the Scribes and Pharisees interrupted him; and gathering round, desired he would inform them by what authority he acted in so commanding a manner? —
24. Jesus, knowing it was in vain to reason with them,
25. answered them by a question. Tell me first, said he, whether you consider the mission of John the Baptist as divine or human? This question, in fact, included

† This idea indeed is not expressed in our Saviour's words; but it is so strongly implied in the circumstance of the action, as to render words needless. — *Removing a mountain* is only an eastern figure for performing a difficult matter. Ben Azzai, say the Talmudists, was so profound a teacher, that *there was not, in his days, such another rooter up of mountains as he*. See Lightfoot's Heb. and Talm. exer. v. ii p. 228. — It is to be remembered also that such a prayer as is here supposed, will never be directed to improper objects.

an answer ; for whatever was the authority of John, such also was the authority of Jesus. It perplexed the Pharisees, therefore, not a little. If we shall acknowledge, said they, the mission of John to be divine, it immediately recurs, why then do you not believe in Christ, whose authority he proved ? On the other hand, if we declare we believe it human, we are in danger from the multitude ; for the people believe John to have been a true prophet. They answered, therefore, they could not tell. It is to no purpose then, said Jesus, for me to give you any farther answer to the question you demand.

Jesus then spoke the following parable : A certain man had two sons, whom he ordered to work in his vineyard. One of them at first refused ; but afterwards coming to himself, he repented, and went. The other with great reverence, received his father's orders ; but, in the end, never went into the vineyard at all. Which now, continued Jesus, was the more obedient son ? — The former, undoubtedly, they said. — Jesus, then, in very plain language, gave them to understand, this was just the case between the Gentile world and them — and that, in fact, their heathen neighbours were better disposed than they were to embrace the gospel. You, said he, will not

31. From the mention made of *publicans* and *harlots*, one should rather be led to suppose that Jesus meant to shew the chief priests and elders, that such as they esteemed the most profligate, were nearer the kingdom of heaven than they were : but from the drift of the parable, and the allusion to two sons, (as in Luke xv. 11.) it rather appears as if Jesus meant an opposition between the Jews and Gentiles. See also verse 43 of this chapter.

even acknowledge the divine mission of John, which the most adandoned of the people acknowledged.

33. Jesus then, by an apt similitude, represented to them their behaviour to God under the dispensation both of the law and the gospel. — A householder, said he, planted a vineyard; and having fenced it, and furnished it with every thing proper, put it into 34-35-36. the hands of labourers, and took a journey. At the season, he sent different servants, at different times, to collect the fruits. But the labourers treated them all with indignity and cruelty, and even put some of 37. them to death. At last, he sent his son, not doubting but they would shew him a proper respect. But it 38. fell out otherwise. The labourers thinking, if they 39. should destroy the heir, the inheritance should be 40. theirs, killed even the son himself. — What, therefore, added Jesus, shall the master of the vineyard do to those wicked labourers? — No doubt, said the 41. Pharisees, he will punish them with just severity, and send other labourers into his vineyard. — Did you 42. never read, continued Jesus, *that the stone which the builders rejected, is become the chief stone in the corner;*

33. Our Saviour obliquely gives the form of a prophecy to this parable, which is copied, with a very few alterations, from the 5th chapter of Isaiah. — Digging wine-presses, Sir J. Chardin says, is still practised in Persia.

37. *It may be, they will reverence my son.* This is merely an ornamental circumstance; for we are assured God foresaw the death of Christ.

41. Bowyer conjectures, that λεγεσιν αυτω should be omitted. The sense will then be, *What will he do to those husbandmen? He will destroy, &c.* This makes the passage agree with Luke xx. 26. where the chief priests answer, *God forbid!*

42. Psa. cxviii. 22.

uniting the different parts of the building together ? He then told them, that if they continued thus hardened, all offers of grace should be taken from them, and given to those who would except them with gratitude ; and that, in the end, if they continued impenitent, the weight of that corner stone, which they had so long despised, would fall upon them, and finally crush them. — This conversation, so plainly directed against the chief priests and Pharisees, incensed them to such a degree, that they wished to apprehend Jesus ; but durst not do it at so public a season, because of the people, who considered him with the highest veneration as a prophet.

On another occasion, about this time, Jesus represented to the Pharisees the danger of rejecting the gospel, under the following similitude. — A prince, said he, on the marriage of his son, made a feast ; and when it was ready, sent his servants to call the guests whom he had invited. But they, instead of accepting the invitation, made light excuses ; and some of them even ill-treated his servants. The

CHAP.
XXI.

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2.3.4.5.6.

7.8.9.10.

44. This alludes to the *judicial* manner of stoning among the Jews, which was not (as was sometimes done in a *tumultuary way*) by pelting with stones, but performed thus: The witnesses stood on a place about twelve or fourteen feet high: the criminal was laid in a proper situation below. The first witness endeavoured to crush him with a large stone; but if that had not its effect, they threw upon his head a stone as much as two men could lift. See Lightfoot, vii. p. 229.

7. *He sent out his troops and destroyed those murderers, and burnt their city.* This seems to allude to the Roman army destroying Jerusalem. If so, we have at once a parable and a prophecy.

G 4

prince,

prince, intened at their behaviour, issued, at the same time, an order to punish those wicked people, and an invitation to other guests. The servants accordingly gathered all they found, from the roads, and other places of public resort, till the room was entirely filled. The king then coming in to see his guests, observed a person who had not had the precaution to put on a wedding-garment. He accosted him in such language as was due; and finding him without excuse, he punished him as he deserved. From hence Jesus gave his hearers to understand, that every one was not among the righteous, *who, in appearance, accepted the call.*

15, 16, 17. The Pharisees, highly irritated at these discourses, and finding the difficulty of effecting any thing by violence against Jesus, wished to insnare him in his discourse; and, if possible, to find such matter as might be produced against him before the Roman governor. It was a great question among the Jews, at that time, whether, as God's peculiar people, they

12. This parable was intended chiefly to shew the Jews, that the offers of grace which they rejected, should be made to the Gentiles. But the latter part of it might be meant to check the presumption of all pretenders to God's favour without endeavouring to deserve it.—It was customary for the bridegroom to prepare garments for his guests. This man is supposed in the parable to have intruded without that requisite.

16. This question was first raised by Judas of Galilee, who suffered for it in an insurrection. It was still however a popular question.—The *Herodians* are mentioned in the text as accompanying the Pharisees. As they were violent party-men under Herod, in upholding the Roman power, they were well-chosen witnesses to be present at the conference.

ought

ought to acknowledge any temporal prince? It was a dangerous question also; as a decision, on one side might irritate the Romans; and, on the other, the Jews. With this insnaring inquiry, therefore, the Pharisees dispatched some artful men to Jesus, who, pretending great devotion to him on the account of his wisdom and sanctity, asked him, as if to settle their own consciences, Whether it were lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar? — Jesus, knowing their insidious design, 18. 19. bad them shew him the tribute-money. On their 20. producing a Roman penny, he asked whose image and inscription it bore? They answered, Cæsar's. Give then to Cæsar, replied Jesus, the things which 21. are Cæsar's, and to God the things which are God's. — An answer so full of caution, propriety, and 22. wisdom, astonished and silenced them.

These people had not long left him, when a body 23. of Sadducees came forward. The Sadducees did not believe a future state; and brought a question, which appeared to them a direct proof of their opinion. Master, said they, Moses enjoins that if a man die 24.

19. The penny, or *denarius*, is a small silver coin, somewhat heavier than a sixpence, though not so broad. Numbers of them are found, at this day, in various parts of England and other places where the Romans have been stationed. The denarius was worth about seven-pence halfpenny of our money.

21. Our Saviour seems to answer with purposed ambiguity. He neither acknowledges nor denies the right of the Romans to impose a tribute on the Jews: and the wisdom of his answer consists in leaving them to put their own construction on his words. Whose is this image and superscription? they say, Cæsar's. If you acknowledge it to be Cæsar's, then give it to Cæsar.

without

without issue, his brother shall marry his widow, to
 25-26-27. continue the family. Now we can produce an instance
 of seven brethren, who had the same wife, one after
 28. another. If there be a future state, therefore, we
 should be glad to know, which of those seven bre-
 29-30. thren should claim the woman? Jesus told them, their
 ignorance proceeded entirely from their understanding
 neither the will of God, as revealed in the scriptures,
 nor his power. The state of the next world, he
 informed them, was not to be upheld by marriage,
 31. which ceased after this life. He then added, in
 opposition to their general principle, that, if they be-
 lieved in Moses, they must also believe in a future
 32. state. What does God mean, said he, when he de-
 clares himself to be the God of Abraham, the God
 of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? You cannot suppose
 that he would stile himself the God of dead people;
 but of those patriarchs who were still in a state of
 existence.

33. These things having been said before the multi-
 tude, greatly raised their admiration of Jesus. But
 34-35-36. the Pharisees were differently affected. When they

32. Our Saviour here reasons with the Sadducees from Moses
 (Exod. iii. 6.) as they acknowledged only the Pentateuch.

35. There seems to be some difficulty in this passage. It does
 not well appear how the question was insidious; unless on some
 such supposition as I have made in the text. — (See a note on the
 parallel passage in St. Mark, xii. 28.) This supposition seems
 the better grounded, as in the very next chapter our Saviour
 makes the same distinction. *Ye pay tithes of mint, and anise, and
 cummin; and omit the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy,
 and faith. These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other
 undone.* Matt. xxiii. 23.

saw

saw the Sadducees thus silenced, they gathered again 37-38, 39
about him; and one of them, with an insidious in-
tention, asked him, which was the great point in the
law? having an eye, probably, to some popular opi-
nions about the ceremonial law. But Jesus, referring
him to the moral part of it, laid the stress on love to
God and man; to establish which great points, he 40.
said, the ceremonies of the law and the writings of
the prophets entirely tended.

Jesus then turning to the Pharisees, asked them, 41- 42.
what their opinion was of the Messiah, as predicted
by the prophets; and particularly, whose son he
was? They answered, without all doubt the son
of David. — How is it then, said Jesus, that David, 43- 44.
speaking of the Messiah, in the spirit of prophecy,
calls him Lord; saying, *The Lord said unto my* 45.
Lord, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine
enemies thy footstool? How can he at the same time
be David's superior and inferior, existing before
David and after him? — The Pharisees, unable to 46.
answer this question, were confounded; and from
this time made no farther attempt to ensnare him in
his discourse.

37. The love of God is one point only of the law — yet if you keep it, you will naturally be led to fulfil every other. So of the second commandment (ver. 39.) though the love of our neighbour is only one point, yet it will naturally engage us to fulfil every other social duty, as explained in Romans xiii. 9, 10. — The passages of the law, to which our Saviour alludes, are Deut. vi. 5; and Levit. xix. 18.

44. Psa. cx. 1.

CHAP. XXIII. Jesus having thus silenced the Scribes and Pharisees, thought it right to give the people a just notion of them and their doctrine. While they continued therefore on the spot he told his disciples, and the multitude around him, that they ought to obey the Scribes and Pharisees, as ruler executing the law of Moses: but take care, said he, how you follow their example. Their actions and their precepts totally differ. However strict they may be to others, with regard to themselves they are sufficiently remiss. The praise of men is all they seek. For this they add breadth to their phylacteries and depth to their fringes. For this they seek the highest seats at entertainments, and in the synagogues: for this they give each other sounding titles, and respectable salutations: but do not you affect such distinctions. Be you humble and lowly-minded, and refer all praise to God. To him every degree of *self-exaltation* is displeasing.

Then turning again to the Scribes and Pharisees, Highly guilty, said he, are you in the eye of God,

3. It is more probable that our Saviour alludes here to the *judicial capacity* of the Scribes and Pharisees. As *teachers of the law* he often reprimands them.

5. The phylactery was a scrap of parchment inscribed with some passage from the law of Moses, which the Pharisee (interpreting literally Deut. vi. 8, and other similar passages) wore on the front of his cap. The fringe was ordered by Moses, as we read in Numbers xv. 38. He therefore who wore his phylactery and his fringe of the largest size, was thought to be the greatest devotee. The phylactery became afterwards matter of superstition in driving away devils, &c.

for opposing his last great dispensation in the gospel. Its gracious offers you will neither yourselves accept, nor suffer others. You hypocritical guides, who substitute long prayers in the room of works of charity; and make profelytes only with a view to propagate impiety. — What absurd distinctions make you in oaths? How can you conceive, that an oath by the money given to the temple, or by the gift on the altar, is binding; while oaths by the temple, or altar themselves, (which, in fact, consecrate both) are invalid? Be assured, that he who sweareth by the creature (be it under any denomination) sweareth also by the Creator. — Look into your guilty lives, you hypocrites. See with what exactness you perform each less important ceremony; yet how lax you are, at the same time in every moral duty. Your outward deportment is all religious; while the sentiments of your hearts are polluted with every impurity. Like adorned sepulchres, your outside is

14.

15.

16. 17. 18.

19. 20. 21.

22.

23. 24. 25.

26.

27. 28.

15. Horace alludes to this spirit of making profelytes among the Jews.

— Ac veluti te

Judæi, cogemus in hanc concedere turbam.

Hor. Sat. i. 4.

16. The Jews had strange and absurd distinctions about oaths, as appears from various parts of the Talmudic writings.

23. Tithe was paid for the service of the temple. The scrupulous exactness therefore in paying it, was considered by the Pharisees as the perfection of religion.

24. *Strain out a gnat, rather than strain at a gnat.*

25. *He makes clean the outside of the cup and platter, but within, &c.* This is not spoken literally, but is a simile or parable, representing the difference between their outward demeanor and their hearts.

27. Sepulchres in the east, Dr. Shaw tells us, are still adorned with great care.

fair;

- 29-30-31. fair; your inside mere corruption.. You build the tombs of the prophets, and acknowledge yourselves to be the children of those who put them to death, and yet exceed even your fathers in wickedness:
32. 33. Your hypocrisy indeed may deceive men, but will
- 34-35-36. not enable you to escape the justice of God. Apostles and righteous teachers shall be sent among you; but you shall treat them as your fathers did the prophets of old — that all the holy blood that hath been shed in the world may be required of this sinful nation †. — O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou city polluted with wickedness, how often have I called thee to repentance! and made thee the tenderest and kindest offers of mercy! but all in vain. Thy desolation is at hand. That awful hour approaches,
- 37.
- 38.
- 39.

29. Josephus says, that Herod was at great expence in beautifying the sepulchre of David; to which St. Peter alludes, Acts ii. 29.

32. Bowyer conjectures, that *fill ye up*, should rather be in the future; *ye will fill up*.

35. It is a great question who *Zacharias* the son of *Barachias* was. What makes it a difficulty, is an account we have in Josephus of the death of a Zacharias in a future period, attended with circumstances very similar to these of the evangelist. Of this the deist takes advantage. The evangelist, says he, could not write at the time he pretends, because he alludes to a fact which happened thirty years after. — Dr. Lardner, in the first volume of his *Credibil.* seems to settle very satisfactorily, that our Saviour alludes to that Zacharias of whom we have an account 2 Chron. xxiv. 20.

† This severe invective of our blessed Saviour against the Scribes and Pharisees, must not be a pattern to us — He knew the hearts of men. — Besides, we must distinguish between what he said as a prophet, and what he said as instruction to us. The prophet denounced God's vengeance against the wicked. Of this we have many instances in the Old Testament, and a few in the New.

when

when thy calamities shall at length draw from thee an acknowledgment of the truth.

Jesus having said these things, left the multitude, and retired. As he went out of the temple, his disciples observed to him the grandeur of its various buildings. Grand as they were, he said, the time approached when one stone should not be left upon another. He then ascended the mount of Olives, and sitting down in full view of the temple, and all its splendid buildings, his disciples continued the discourse, and desired to know, what signs should point out the ruin of the Jewish nation, and the end of all things? CHAP. XXIV. 1. 2. 3-

In the first place said Jesus, guard against deception: for many false Messiahs shall arise, and mislead mankind by their delusions. Wars and famines, pestilences 4. 5. 6. 7. 8.

2. There is no occasion to consider this as spoken *literally*; and yet we are assured by historians that it was *almost literally* fulfilled. Josephus tells us, that Titus ordered his soldiers to dig up and overthrow (*κατασκαπτειν*) the whole temple, except three towers, which he left as a monument of its greatness.

3. Jerusalem was built on a hill, opposite to which was another hill, called the mount of Olives. The valley of Cedron ran betwixt them. The foot of the mount of Olives therefore approached very near Jerusalem, though some of its more retired parts were at a considerable distance.

3. The disciples probably had but a confused idea of the question. They might have respect to that general restitution which the Jewish doctors expected after the times of the Messiah; or they might suppose that the *destruction of Jerusalem*, and the *end of all things*, were concomitant events. Their divine master, however, seem to take their question literally, as if it included two inquiries. I have endeavoured in the following notes to mark the limits of each.

7. All these signs in an eminent degree preceded the destruction of Jerusalem. Wars, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes

9. 11. 10. pestilences and earthquakes shall precede that great
 12. 13 14. desolation. You also shall be the scorn of bad men,
 who will treat you with every indignity, and put you
 to death. You shall see also a great desertion of the
 truth. Yet amidst all these false prophets and false
 professors, the gospel shall have made its way even
 among the Gentiles, before that great event shall be
 accomplished†. Then shall you see the abomination
 of desolation spoken of by Daniel — the armies and
 images of heathen nations advancing round the city.
 15. 16. 17. And let all who believe these prophetic warnings, fly
 18. 19. 20.
 21. 22.

quakes are all mentioned. Josephus is full of prodigies which preceded this dreadful event; and even the judicious Tacitus, (Hist. v. 13.) thus speaks of them: "Many prodigies also appeared, which a superstitious people, averse to the rites of religion, refused to expiate. Hosts of men, with glittering arms, were seen engaging in the heavens; while the whole temple seemed on fire. Its gates were burst open; and a voice more than human resounded over the city, *The Gods have left you*. Tumultuous noises of multitudes rushing out were at the same instant heard." — And with regard to the wars; with which the whole empire was at that time shaken, Tacitus says, that, *Totius orbis mutatione fortuna imperii transit*. — As to imposters and false prophets, which our Saviour emphatically takes notice of, it was indeed chiefly through their delusions and promises of deliverance, that the Jews were incited to those frequent rebellions which at length so highly incensed the Romans against them. See Acts xxi. 38. and Joseph. de Bell. Jud. ii. 13. 4.

† See Rom. x. 18. Coloss. i. 6. 23.

15. See Dan ix. 27. This abomination probably refers to the setting up of heathen idols in the temple.

16 Josephus and Eusebius both inform us, that numbers of Christians fled from the calamities of the siege; and the latter expressly mentions Pella, a town on the banks of Jordan, where they found an asylum.

20. *Pray that your flight be not in the winter.* The Talmudists express themselves to the same effect. *The Lord showed mercy on Israel. They should have been carried away to Babylon in the tenth month, when all would have perished by the winter; but God prolonged the time; and they were led away in the summer.*

from

from this devoted place, and pray to God to alleviate calamities which shall be greater than the world ever before saw; but which God will graciously terminate, in his appointed time, for the sake of his pious servants. — But above all things, take care not to be led away by the delusions of false Christs, and false prophets, who shall endeavour to deceive even those who are established in the faith. I have already warned you against them; wherever they are pointed out to you, in the desert, or in the city, believe them not. The coming of the real Messiah, like lightning, prevades every part of the world;

23. 24.

25. 26. 27.

28.

23. 24. Some interpreters do not suppose this to be a repetition; but that as the former false prophets appeared as signs *before* the siege, these appeared *during* the continuance of it. It is true such false pretenders did arise *during* the siege; but I think our Saviour still speaks of the former. All Christians were expressly warned to fly *from* the siege; and as we are assured they did, they were in no danger of being deceived by any false prophets *after* the siege had commenced.

28. If I be not satisfied with the interpretation of this verse, which I have here offered, I must own, I am as little so with the usual interpretations. I cannot think that the *eagles* here are meant to denote either the swiftness of the Messiah's coming, or the Roman standards, on which eagles were portrayed. Perhaps the best sense of all is, that it is a proverbial expression, signifying, that wherever the enemies of religion are, there, at some time or other, the vengeance of heaven will *overtake them*, of which Jerusalem should be a signal example. — But though this interpretation may agree perhaps better with the *words*, yet the interpretation I have given seems to agree better with the *context*; in which our Saviour is opposing the true Christ to the false pretenders that should arise. — This interpretation, I think, seems to have struck Mr. Addison as the just one: it is probable he alludes to this passage, and to this explanation of it, in the following words: "How else, during the apostles lives, could Christianity have spread itself with such amazing progress through the several nations of the Roman empire? How could it fly like lightning, and carry conviction with it from one end of the earth to the other?" Addison's Evidences, &c.

while false Messiahs, like eagles flocking to their prey, have always some quarry or partial end in view.

29.30.31. — Then will approach the awful time, when nature dissolving, and all the tribes of the earth mourning in conscious guilt, the son of God will send forth his heavenly ministers, and make the grand separation of
32. 33. good and bad. — Thus, as the budding of the tree shews you the approach of summer, so let the signs I have given you point out that great event, about which
34. 35. you inquire. Nor is it far distant. This generation, be assured, shall see it fulfilled.

36. As to that other great event, *the end of all things*, God hath reserved that as a secret with himself. Be the

31. From the sudden destruction of Jerusalem here first our Saviour (whose constant practice it was to draw every subject to some useful point) seems to make a transition to the end of the world; and to temporal death, which may be considered as the end of the world to every individual. The idea which seems particularly to strike him, and give occasion to the transition, is the separation which should be made between those who should be destroyed in the siege of Jerusalem, and those who should escape from it. — If the reader wishes to see an ample and very satisfactory account of the prophetic mode of blending different subjects, and of passing with rapidity from one to another, he may find it in Bishop Lowth's note on the 13th verse of the 52d chapter of Isaiah. — Some interpreters conceive, that in these passages our Saviour considers the destruction of Jerusalem as a type of the conclusion of all things; and in this view mixes the colours of both catastrophes together. It is not indeed very easy to make the separation. Those grand images employed in the 29th verse, *the sun shall be darkened — the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven* — are certainly much used by the prophets to denote the fall of nations. See Isa. xiii. 10. — xxxiv. 4. Ezek. xxxii. 7. — Joel ii. 30.

36. Some very judicious critics make the words *the end of all things* refer, as I have here referred them, not to the preceding verses, but to the conclusion of the 31st verse. — Indeed, I think, it rather implies a contradiction, if it be otherwise; for our Saviour

says

the time, however, when it may, it will come suddenly on the world. The days of Noah are an emblem of that great and awful visitation. Careless and inattentive, the busy world was then employed in all the ordinary offices of life, when the flood came suddenly upon them; and swept them away. Such also shall be that other great event — sudden, and, in appearance, undistinguishing, carrying off and leaving behind people in outward circumstances exactly the same. — Be, therefore, continually on your guard. If the hour of death had been pointed out to man, he would have been satisfied merely with a partial vigilance. But it is God's will that the hour should be concealed, that man may always be ready. — Let each of you, therefore, endeavour to be that faithful steward, with whom his lord shall intrust his family-affairs. Blessed and kindly rewarded shall that servant be, whom his lord, when he cometh suddenly, shall find in his duty. On the other hand, if he wickedly encourage himself in the hopes of his lord's delay; and, instead of employing his time properly, shall spend it in acts of intemperance and oppression; his lord shall come suddenly upon him, and appoint him that punishment which he hath so well deserved.

Yays plainly that the destruction of Jerusalem should happen during *this generation*. How then could he say the time was a *secret*? — Some have held, that *oidei* signifies here (as it does 1 Cor. ii. 2.) to *make known*, or *declare*; but I think we need no such declaration to shew the absurdity of supposing that men could *make known* or *declare* either the last judgment or the destruction of Jerusalem.

51. *Cutting asunder* was a punishment literally used by some tyrants. Multos honesti ordinis medios ferra dissecuit. Sueton. in vitâ Calig.

- CHAP. XXV. Ten virgins, said Jesus, continuing the subject, took their lamps to meet the bridegroom in a marriage ceremony. Such of them as were prudent, took with them a supply of oil, which the others had neglected. In the mean time, till the procession approached, they reposed. But in the middle of the night, sudden notice was given of the bridegroom's coming. On this all the virgins arose speedily to trim their lamps. The wife were instantly ready; but the imprudent virgins were thrown into great confusion. Then first they recollected their neglect. Their lamps were expiring, and they had no oil to refresh them. While they endeavoured to procure a supply, the bridegroom entered; the door was shut, and all admittance denied. — Be you, therefore, prepared, added Jesus, and always ready; for you know not at what hour you may be called.
- And that you may always be prepared, take care to use those blessings, whatever they are, which God hath given you, to the best advantage. God's dispensations to man, with regard to his various gifts, may be thus illustrated. — A master of a family, going from home, left in the hands of his servants

6. Jewish marriages were celebrated in the night, when the bride was led home by torch light. It was customary indeed in many other countries. Statius introduces the nine Muses with their lamps, leading a bride home :

Demigrant Helicone Deæ, quatuntque novenâ
Lampade solemnem thalamis coeuntibus ignem.

Syl. lib. 2.

9. From this verse the papists chiefly drew their authority for selling indulgences. But if they chose to found a doctrine on the underpart of a parable, they should have considered that the purchasers, after all, were shut out.

several



several sums of money, which he ordered them to improve against his return. To one he gave five talents; to another, two; and to a third, one; proportioning the several sums to the abilities of each. He who had received five talents, and he who had received two, trading with them, doubled each his original sum; while he who had received only one talent, instead of making any use of it, hid it in the ground. — After some time, the master returning, called his servants to account. They to whom he had trusted the larger portions, paid into his hand the gains they had acquired, together with the original sums; and each received commendation, and a proportioned reward. Afterwards, he who had hid his talent in the ground, coming with much contradictory apology, which only increased his offence, returned the talent he had received, entirely unimproved. His lord giving him a severe rebuke, in which he pointed out to him, from his own excuse, his slothful and negligent behaviour, punished him with proper severity, and gave his unemployed talent to him who had already

16. 17.

18.

19.

20. 21. 22. 23.

24. 25.

26. 27. 28. 29. 30.

23. The doctrine inculcated in this parable is, that whether we are in high circumstances or low, if we improve our talents equally, our reward also shall be equal; which is a most comfortable doctrine to those in low stations. The station is nothing; the improvement is all. — This doctrine is mentioned by Mr. Necker, the French financier, as one of the *distinctive characters* of the morality of the gospel, in his excellent book on the Importance of religious sentiments.

24. *Thou knewest, &c. rather, Knewest thou?*

29. *From him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath.* Thus Juvenal, in a similar manner expresses himself:

Nil habuit Codrus — et tamen illud
Perdidit infelix nil —

ten; saying, That more should still be given to those who improved what they had, while they who neglected even a little, should not only loose that little, but suffer for the neglect.

31. 32. 33. Jesus concluded his divine discourse with a representation of the last judgment. When the son of man, said he, shall appear in his glory, sitting on his throne, with all the holy angels around him, then shall be assembled before him all the nations of the earth, whom he shall separate and divide as a shepherd divides his flock. — To them on his right hand, he shall thus speak; Come, ye blessed, inherit that state of happiness which hath been prepared for you — that

31. In the former parable, our Saviour had shewn that we ought to improve our talents; in this, he proceeds a step further, and shews *in what manner* we ought to improve them — in acts of mercy and kindness to each other.

31. Some fix the transition to a future judgment at this verse, The 40th and 41st verses of chap. xxiv. have indeed no relation to a last judgment; but they are very descriptive of the indiscriminate manner in which death carries off mankind: and the 42d and following verses apply more to this idea than to the destruction of Jerusalem. So does all the beginning of the xxvth chapter.

34. The phrase in the original, *which hath been prepared for you from the foundation of the world*, has often been brought to countenance God's absolute decrees. But surely it is pressed harshly into this service, and can only be supposed to mean, by the fairest rules of interpretation, that the kingdom of heaven is prepared from the foundation of the world for those who render themselves worthy of it.

35. From the *general tenor* of scripture we are not to suppose that the stress is laid on occasional acts of mercy, or any acts of mercy at all, unless they flow from a true Christian motive — the devoting of ourselves and all our acts of mercy to God. And yet we may suppose, that when the habit of benevolence is formed, an act of kindness to a fellow-creature, which flows from this principle, may find its reward, though we may not think, at the time of performing that act, of its being required by God.

recompence

recompence which ye shall now reap for all those acts of kindness and mercy which I have received at your hands. They, with great modesty, will profess they never had any opportunity of doing him service. To me, in my own person, he will say, you never had; but I take to myself those kind offices which on earth you performed to others. — Then turning to those on his left hand, and ordering them to depart to that state of misery which their wicked and impenitent hearts deserved, he will remind them of that want of tenderness and compassion which they had shewn to him, through the whole course of their lives. On their asserting their innocence, he will inform them, that their unkind and cruel behaviour to their brethren was the same to him as if it had been shewn to himself. — The awful sentence having passed, the final doom shall succeed: the former shall take possession of everlasting happiness; the latter shall be doomed to everlasting misery. — Jesus having thus brought his heavenly discourse to a point, before he concluded it,

41. 42. 43.

44. 45.

46.

CHAP.
XXVI.

1. 2.

46. It may be remarked here that the *same* word (*αἰώνος*) is used to express both *future punishments* and *future rewards*. One should suppose, therefore, it means to place the duration of both on the same footing.

1. Here our Saviour concludes that elevated discourse which began at the 24th chapter, on a question proposed by the disciples, with regard to the time of the destruction of the temple. From that event Jesus takes occasion to speak of the consummation of all things, blending with it the mortality of man, which to every individual has the effect of that consummation. From thence he proceeds (still parabolically) to shew, in chap. xxv. the duty of preparation for that great event. This very naturally introduces the parable of the ten talents; which shews, that every man has his gifts varied by Providence; that *his proper* preparation

it, reminded his disciples once more, but with an exactness as to time, which he had not yet observed, that within two days the feast of the passover should be celebrated; and that he should then be betrayed into the hands of his enemies, who should put him to death.

3. His enemies were indeed then consulting against him. A meeting of the chief priests, scribes, and elders, was held at the palace of Caiphas the high priest, with a view to put a stop to the growing influence of Jesus and his doctrines; and the question was, Whether it were advisable to apprehend him, and put him to death? But his credit with the people, and the difficulty of doing it, were such, that, after much debating, it was thought an improper step; at least during the ensuing festival.
4. 5.
6. In the mean time, Jesus retired to Bethany, to the house of Simon, whom he had formerly cured of a
7. leprosy. Here a woman coming in, respectfully
8. 9. anointed his head with very costly ointment; at which

must consist in the improvement of those gifts; and that it will be expected the improvement shall be in proportion to the gift. — Then the last great scene opens—the general judgment; when all men shall be rewarded and punished according to the use, or abuse, of their several gifts. Here our Saviour shews how much the stress shall be laid on acts of mercy and kindness. Thus he brings his discourse home to the feelings of men: and draws this divine instruction to one noble, grand, and interesting conclusion.

5. The Romans, at the time of the passover, were so much afraid of insurrections, that they always doubled their city-guard.

the disciples taking offence, called it a needless waste; and said, That ointment of such value might have been sold for a considerable sum, and given to the poor. But Jesus told them she had done well. You have the poor, said he, always with you; but me you have not always. I consider this action, therefore, as an embalming of my body before my burial: and in whatever light you may consider it, it shall always be remembered in her favour.

It was at this time that Judas Iscariot, leaving Jesus and his fellow-disciples privately, went to the chief priests, and offered to betray his master. They had at that time dropped the design of apprehending Jesus at the passover: but, on such an offer, they resumed it; and agreeing with Judas for a sum of

14. It is probable that Judas had all along followed Jesus through *temporal views*; but being now at length convinced that his expectations had no grounds, and having no faith in his master's *spiritual promises*, he deliberated how he might turn the mistake he had made in life to the best advantage.

15. If the thirty pieces of silver were shekels (as they probably were) it was the price of a slave (Exod. xxi. 32.) which is very remarkable. — The sum amounted to about 3*l.* 1*s.* of our money.

16. The Jews had dropped the design of apprehending Jesus because of the people: but having now gotten an opportunity of seizing him privately in the night, they determined to have him examined by the high-priest, and condemned by the Roman governor early in the morning, before the people could get together; and if they could put him fairly into the hands of the Roman soldiery, there was no farther fear of rescue. This seems the more probable from the parallel passage of St. Luke, (xxii. 6.) where it is said that Judas *sought opportunity to betray him in the absence of the multitude*. — All this was executed as it had been planned.

money,

money, they sent him back, with instructions to give them the earliest notice of his master's privacy.

17. In the mean time, the passover approaching, the disciples asked Jesus where he would have it provided?
18. He bad them go into the city, where they should find a person circumstanced as he described, to whom they should make known his intention of eating the
19. 20. passover at his house. This was accordingly done. The passover was provided; and Jesus went with his
21. disciples to celebrate it in the evening. — In the midst of supper, he told them openly, that one of
22. them should betray him. All inquired with great earnestness, and marks of sorrow, which of them he
23. meant? Jesus told them, it was one who even then
24. eat with him. It is necessary, said he, that the son of man should die; but that necessity is no excuse for him by whom he is betrayed. That man's sin is great indeed. — On this, Judas himself had the boldness

20. Bp. Pearce inserts here an excellent note, in which he discusses the point, whether the paschal lamb was killed in private houses, or only in the temple. Philo is his authority for the former supposition; Josephus for the latter. After weighing both sides, he inclines to Philo.

23. *He that dipped with me in the dish*; that is, in the basin of vinegar, in which the Jews dipped their bitter herbs at the celebration of the passover.

25. We have here one of those frightful examples of hardened wickedness, often seen in common life, which, against all admonition, checks, and remonstrances, obstinately perseveres in some wicked deed, which hath been undertaken. Even in improved understandings, we often find the corrupt heart hath its reasonings to support the *wickedest* actions against the *strongest* conviction.

to ask Jesus whether he were the person? To which Jesus replied in such language, as shewed plainly that he was.

Jesus then taking bread, blessed and brake it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, Eat this in remembrance of my body that is given for you. Then taking a cup, he blessed it likewise; and bad them all drink of it, in remembrance of his blood, that was shed for the remission of sins. He then told them, he appointed this commemoration in the room of the Jewish passover: after which they sang a hymn, and retired to the mount of Olives.

Then Jesus again reminding them of his approaching sufferings; This night said he, will put your constancy to the test — That prophecy of the Messiah

26. I have used the word *blessed*, according to our translation; but the words used promiscuously by the evangelists are *eulogous*, and *ευχαριστος*, both of which are introduced on various common occasions. Neither of them, therefore, properly gives the title of *consecration* to the prayer in our communion-service.

29. This passage in the original is obscure: but if we compare it with Luke xii. 16. and likewise with the event, we are led to suppose this to be the most consistent meaning which the words will admit. *I will not drink henceforth*; I will have the passover now abolished; and wine shall be henceforth drunk in a new way, as I institute it. *Till I drink it*, may be an expression equivalent to its being done by my appointment. — It is plain our Saviour founded both his sacraments on Jewish rites. Circumcision and baptism were used together; though only the first seems to be of divine authority. Christ rejected the former, and took the latter. Thus, too, the paschal lamb was commonly eaten with the accompaniments of bread and wine. Christ rejected the lamb, and adopted the bread and wine. See Lightfoot, vol. ii. p. 118. — Some make this difficult passage equivalent to Christ's saying, he had done with the world. (See Wakefield's Crit. Sac.) But that appears to me not to have been the case. Christ continued forty days on earth after his resurrection.

30. The words in the original will bear to be translated, they repeated a hymn, or thanksgiving. — It is not every body who can sing; and therefore psalmody cannot be imposed as a duty.

31. Zech. xiii. 7.

shall

shall be fulfilled; *I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.* Be not, however, discouraged; when I am risen again, I will meet you in Galilee.
 — Peter, grieved to think that Jesus had any doubt of the constancy of his disciples, declared, that for himself at least, nothing could ever shake his fidelity.
 — Jesus, checking his confidence, assured him, that, that very night, before the cock should crow, he should three several times deny him. Peter, with the same earnest zeal, cried out, he might die with him; but to deny him was impossible: to which the other disciples assented.

36. 37. Jesus proceeding a little farther to a part of the mount of Olives called Gethsemane, from the oil-presses which were there, bad Peter, James, and John, follow him to a more retired part of the mountain.
 38. 39. Here he was in great agony, which drew from him strong expressions of distress. Then leaving the three disciples a few paces, and ordering them to watch, he fell on the ground and prayed, saying, O my father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. Return-
 40. ing to them, he found them asleep. What, said he

39. What the particular circumstances were, which in so high a degree embittered the death of our blessed Saviour, we are not told; but certainly they must have been circumstances of a very aggravating nature which could draw from so exalted a character those impassioned expressions, both before and at the time of his death. How far the guilt of a sinful world, and the office of atonement, might aggravate his last sufferings, who can tell? In the other evangelists, especially in St. Mark, our blessed Saviour's agonies in the garden are expressed in still stronger terms.

40. We may suppose, what it not improbable from the whole tenor of the relation, that the disciples were not *literally* asleep;

to

to Peter, could not you watch one hour with me? Watch and pray that God may enable you to bear this great trial, which is coming upon you. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Then, leaving them again, he cried with great earnestness, O my father, if this cup may not pass from me, except I drink it, thy will be done! A second time finding them asleep, he went away, and prayed in the same impassioned manner; and finding them asleep a third time, he awoke them, saying, The cause of your watching is now over. But new trials approach. The hour of darkness is at hand. I am now betrayed into the power of my enemies.

He had scarce spoken, when a number of armed men from the chief priests and elders entered the place, with Judas at their head; who, according to a sign agreed on, coming up to Jesus, saluted him.

though not in that wakeful, vigilant disposition, which so great a crisis required.

41. *The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.* The tenderness of this excuse is inimitable; and its being uttered in the midst of the greatest distress is a noble example to us. — I cannot conceive on what grounds any commentators, as some do, suppose Jesus to speak of himself.

42. The best commentators suppose, that Jesus did not pray for the removal of death; which, indeed, would have been inconsistent with the whole scheme of redemption; John xii. 27.: but only for the removal of those sufferings (whatever they were) which he then underwent. See Mark xiv. 35, where this *cup* is explained to mean this *bowl*.

45. This great indifference in the disciples shewed how little they were yet affected with the magnitude of that event, in which they were now about to be involved. — Bowyer conjectures the expression, *sleep on now, and take your rest*, should rather be put interrogatively; *do you still sleep on, and take your rest?* This certainly makes the sense better.

47. It is probable, that when Jesus retired from the other disciples at Gethsemane, Judas took that opportunity to slip away, and go to the chief priests.

Jesus

Jesus asking him his intention, the armed men immediately came upon him, and seized him. One of the disciples, seeing such violence offered to his master, drew a sword, and struck a person near him, who happened to be one of the servants of the high-priest, and cut off his ear. Jesus, rebuking this violent disposition in general, and especially on this occasion, said, if he had wanted aid, it were easy for him to apply for it in any proportion from heaven. But how then, he added, would this great work, in which I am engaged, have been accomplished? — Then turning to the armed men, he asked them, why they came in that forcible and secret manner to apprehend him in the night? and why, if they had law and justice on their side, they did not apprehend him openly in the temple, where he might always have been found? — But your employers, said he, unwittingly fulfil the great scheme of God, and all the prophecies that introduce it.

From Gethsemane the guards immediately led him to the palace of Caiphas the high-priest, where the elders of the Jews were already assembled. — The disciples, in the mean time, seeing that all was now over, took the means of securing themselves by flight;

50. Εταίρος, companion, not friend.

52. *All that take the sword shall perish with the sword.* As if our Saviour had said, They who take the sword against lawful authority, or in an improper cause, subject themselves to the penalty inflicted by the sword.

56. I render this verse according to a conjecture of Bowyer's, who would translate, *ταυτο δε ολον γεγονεν*, *all this is done*; which makes them the words of Christ. According to our translation, they are the words of St. Matthew.

but

but Peter, following at a distance, entered the palace, and, mixing with the servants, waited the event.

As soon as Jesus was brought before the high-^{59.60.61.} priest, every method was used to suborn evidence against him: and though many false witnesses were produced, yet nothing criminal, in any degree, could be made out. At length, two men deposed, they had heard him say, *he was able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.* It was well known in^{62.} what figurative sense Jesus had used that expression. However the high-priest rising from his seat, took it up, as if it had contained criminal matter, and asked Jesus, what he had to say in his defence? Jesus^{63.} was silent: on which the high-priest adjured him, by the living God, to say, whether he were the Messiah, the son of God? — Jesus replied, he was; and add-^{64.} ed, that the Jewish nation should shortly see a dreadful instance of his power; when they should be called to a severe account for their infidelity and impenitence. — Then the high-priest, tearing his garment,^{65.} as if in horror at hearing such impieties, cried out, What need we farther witnesses? you all hear his blasphemy. — The whole assembly, with one mouth,^{66.} assenting, he was pronounced guilty. — Jesus was^{67. 68.} then left in the hands of the high priest's servants; who seemed as if licensed to exercise every degree of indignity they could invent.

65. The rabbies say, that *he who heareth blasphemy, is bound to rend his garments: and the garments thus rent, are never again to be repaired,*

While

69. While these things were transacting, Peter sat with the servants in the hall, where he was challenged by a maid-servant, who drew the attention of the rest upon him, by declaring, that she had seen him with
70. Jesus of Galilee. Peter avowed solemnly before them
71. all, that he knew nothing of the matter. However, not thinking himself sufficiently safe, he went out into the portico, where another maid saw him, and told those who were standing near, that that person (pointing to Peter) had been seen with Jesus of Na-
72. zareth. Peter overhearing her, denied it with an oath, declaring he did not so much as know the man:
73. Others coming up, told Peter, he certainly was of Jesus's company, for his very speech discovered him
74. 75. to be a Galilean. — Peter, in great agitation, denied with many imprecations that he knew any thing of Jesus: but soon afterwards hearing a cock crow, he remembered the words of his master; and retiring to a secret place, gave vent to the most imbittered passion of grief.

CHAP.
XXVII.

1. 2.

As Judea was a Roman province, the Jews could not legally put a criminal to death. Being resolved, however, to proceed against Jesus in a legal way, and thinking they had now obtained sufficient matter of accusation against him, they carried him very early in the morning before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor.

2. The Roman governor usually resided at Cæsarea, but he often came to Jerusalem at the great feasts, to prevent disturbances.

In

In the mean time, Judas, finding (what, perhaps, 3.
he did not expect) that his master was condemned,
carried back to the chief priests, in an agony of de-
spair, the money he had received, as if hoping to undo 4.
the horrid deed he had committed. In vain he told
them, that he had betrayed an innocent person. —
Answers of levity and scorn were all that he received.
Distracted by his guilty thoughts, he threw down the 5.
money in the temple, and rushing out, put an end to
his life. — The chief priests afterwards, not think- 6. 7.
ing it proper to place this money among the offerings
of the temple, purchased with it a burying-ground
for strangers; from whence that field was afterwards 8.
called *Aeldama*, or the field of blood. Thus was 9. 10.
fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah: *they took the thirty
pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, and
gave them for the potter's field.*

Jesus

3. These were some of the priests employed in the ministration of the temple, equally in conspiracy against Jesus, but not among those who had led him to Pilate.

5. *Απνυχασο* may signify *deprived of breath*; and the best way to reconcile what is said of the death of Judas here, with what is said of it in Acts i. 18, may perhaps be, that when he had thrown down the money he ran out of the temple, and, in a fit of despair, threw himself down one of the precipices on which it stood.

7. Thirty pieces of silver was a trifling price for a field near Jerusalem: but we must consider, it had been dug up for earth for potters-vessels, and therefore of little value in itself, though sufficiently good for the purpose intended. It might also have been, as it probably was, a very small plot of ground.

10. It is remarkable, that this prophecy is not found in Jeremiah, but in Zechariah (xi. 13.). Many things have been said to rectify this mistake; but nothing is more common than the mistake of one name for another. Some original transcriber might first have made it, from whence it might have been copied by others. Bp. Hall's conjecture is ingenious, that the abbreviation of *Ζηρ* might have been mistaken for *Ιερ*: but Wetstein expressly says, that neither this abbreviation nor any similar

11. . Jesus being brought before the governor, was accused chiefly of a design to erect a new kingdom in Judea, in opposition to the Romans. This was supposed to be the best plea they could urge. Pilate, who did not seem to lay much stress upon it, and yet could not entirely neglect it, carelessly asked Jesus, whether he pretended to be the king of the Jews? Jesus told him, that his kingdom was of a very different nature from the kingdoms of this world. —
- 12.13.14. The chief priests then brought other accusations against him; to which Jesus gave no answer, leaving the governor, who was not a little surprised at his silence, to make what use he pleased of the several charges they brought. — Pilate, however, clearly saw, that the whole prosecution was malicious. He was greatly inclined also to favour Jesus from a private motive. He had just received a message from his wife, informing him, that she had been greatly affrighted that morning in a dream, on account of the innocent person, whose cause was then before him;

one is to be found, *ne quidem junioris aevi codices ullos, neque in vetustioribus* — Others say, that the word *Jeremiah*, which was placed at the head of the prophets, is mentioned as the *title* only; as the *Psalms* (Luke xxiv. 44.) for the same reason include other books of scripture. — Others again explain this difficulty by saying that the four last chapters of Zechariah were written by Jeremiah. See Mede's works, p. 709. 963. 1022.

11. See John xviii. 36.

14. It appears that Jesus answered both Pilate and the chief priests to proper and pertinent questions, *Art thou the Christ? Art thou the king of the Jews?* But to frivolous questions he made no answer to either.

19. From this account it appears, how very early in the morning Pilate had sat in judgment, with a view, no doubt, to oblige the chief priests (see a note on Matt. xxvi. 16). — We learn from the Talmudists also, that the chief priests broke one of their

canons

him; and begged he would have no farther hand in it. He determined, therefore, within himself, on an expedient which he thought might save Jesus. — It was a custom at the feast of the passover, for the governor to release some prisoner, at the option of the people; and as there happened to be, at that time, in prison, one Barabbas, a very notorious offender, Pilate proposed this person and Jesus to the people for their option; not doubting but that, prejudiced as they were, they would give Jesus the preference to a murderer. But he found himself mistaken. When he put the question, all present (who, at that early hour, seem to have consisted chiefly of the high-priest's servants and retainers) demanded Barabbas. What then, said Pilate, shall I do with Jesus? They all cried out, Let him be crucified. But what offence, said Pilate, hath he been guilty of? On which the clamour increased, Let him be crucified. — Pilate, seeing plainly that all he said served only to increase the tumult, called for water; and, washing his hands before them, said I am innocent of the blood of this just person: let it

20. 21.
22.
23.
24.

canons in trying a *criminal cause* by night. See Lightfoot's Talm. Exer. v. ii. 263. — It may be farther remarked on this passage, that among heathen superstitions it was one, that morning-dreams were the most ominous.

24. This mode of purification was both a sacred and a heathen custom. The author of the 73d Psalm speaks of *washing his hands in innocency*; and Virgil introduces Æneas saying,

Me, bello e tanto egressum, et cæde recenti,
Attrectare nefas, donec me flumina vivo
Abluero —

Æn. ii. 718.

25. be your doing. On this, they all vehemently cried
 26. out, His blood be on us, and on our children!
 Pilate, therefore, at length, overcome by their clamour, released Barabbas, and condemned Jesus to be scourged and crucified.
27. He was then delivered into the hands of the soldiers, who had the care of the execution, and was carried into the guard-room. Here the whole cohort being called together, adorned him with a scarlet robe; and putting a crown of thorns on his head, and a reed in his right hand, bowed the knee before

25. It is remarkable that Josephus, in his description of the siege of Jerusalem, tells us, that such numbers of the Jews were crucified by the Romans, "that there wanted wood for crosses, and room to place them."

25. The timidity of Pilate in thus giving up an innocent person to the clamour of an enraged multitude, is easily accounted for by the awe under which all Roman governors stood of the leading persons in their several provinces, who had it in their power to complain of mal-administration. The emperors were always ready to lend a willing ear to these complaints, as they furnished pretences to squeeze into their own coffers the sums which rapacious governors had drawn from the people. — We have another instance of the same kind in Acts xxiv. 27.

25. The Romans commonly scourged malefactors before they put them to death. Turpilus condemnatus, verberatusque capite poenas solvit. Sal. Bell. Jug.

29. The earliest Christian writers say nothing of its being a crown of thorns; and from the word in the original (*ακανθας*) we may as well suppose it made of the plant which Virgil calls the *mollis acanthus*. It is very probable, indeed, that the idea was rather of mockery than of cruelty. Beating him with a reed seems not intended to hurt him, but only to ridicule his mock-authority.

29. It is evident, from this mode of mockery among the soldiers, how much the Roman pride was affected by Jesus's being called the *king of the Jews*. For though Pilate had more sense than to be misled by so silly a forgery, yet the chief priests knew well what they were about in throwing it out among the Roman soldiers. — After this idle accusation had served their purpose, they were unwilling to have the idea prevail; and therefore wished Pilate to ~~after~~ an inscription which he had put up in derision. See John xix. 21.

him,

him, crying, Hail, king of the Jews. Then rising 30.
 from their knees they spit upon him, and taking the
 reed out of his hand, they struck him with his own
 mock-sceptre. Having thus satiated their brutal 31·32·33·
 malice, they put his own garments on him, and led
 him to a place called Golgotha, compelling one Si-
 mon, a Cyrenian, to assist him in bearing his cross,
 — When he came to the place, after the fatigue 34·
 he had undergone, they gave him, in the same spirit
 of mockery, a draught of vinegar and gall, which he
 just tasted. Having nailed him to the cross, between 35·36·37·
 two thieves, they fixed over his head an inscription, 38·
This is Jesus, the king of the Jews : and fulfilling a
 prophecy undesignedly, by *parting his garments among*
them, and casting lots on his vesture, they sat down and
 watched him.

Then began a cruel scene of ridicule and contempt 39·40·41·
 from those who attended. *Thou that destroyest the* 42·43·44·

32. It is supposed that by the *cross* here, is meant only the cross-
 piece of wood to which the criminal was nailed; and which he
 carried with him. See Matt. x. 38. This was called *furca* :
 and hence the word *supplicifer*.

33. Golgotha, or Mount Calvary, both signifying the *place of a*
skull, was a very little way out of the western gate of Jerusalem.

34. Some suppose it was an anodyne draught which was often
 given to criminals; but from the hands which administered this,
 we are more readily led to a different supposition.

35. Crucifixion was esteemed so dreadful among the Romans,
 that the word *cruciatu*, which expresses the most exquisite tor-
 ment, is derived from it.

35. Pf. xxii. 18.

39. Not perhaps from such of the common people as happened
 to be present and were disinterested on the occasion. They be-
 haved as described by St. Luke, xxiii. 48. Being unable to do
 any thing for Jesus, in disconsolate sorrow *they smote their breasts*
and returned. And yet some suppose, that the common people
 were at this time in general alienated from him, as they found
 that all their expectations of his being a temporal leader were now
 vanished: and to this opinion a passage in John (ii. 24.) seems to
 give some countenance. — But I think, on the whole, the other
 opinion has more the appearance of truth.

temple, they cried, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the son of God, come down from the cross. Even the chief priests and elders, who attended the execution, joined in these inhuman taunts: *He saved others; himself he cannot save. — If he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him; for he said, I am the son of God. —* Even the very thieves who were crucified with him, reviled him.

45. This great catastrophe began about nine o'clock; and soon after a supernatural darkness, overshadowing the whole scene, continued till the death of Jesus. Six hours he hung upon the cross in patient sufferance.
46. As nature was exhausted, he cried out, in a loud, impassioned tone, *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani*, which signifies, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*
- 47-48-49. On this, one of those who stood by, dipping a sponge in vinegar, and putting it at the end of a reed, lifted it to his mouth; while others, not understanding his words, but supposing he called for Elijah, cried out, Let him alone; let us see whether Elijah will come

44. There is no great difficulty in reconciling this with St. Luke's account of the penitent thief. No liberty is more commonly taken in language than that of putting singulars for plurals, and plurals for singulars.

45. See Mark xv. 25.

46. This darkness is mentioned by the ancient Christians, from Phlegon and Thellus, as an eclipse of the sun. But as the moon was full at the passover, that could not be the case. The best interpretation is, that it was occasioned by dark clouds drawn before the sun.

47. This passage is the beginning of Psalm 22d, in which is contained the most circumstantial prophecy of the death of Christ. It is supposed therefore by some, that our Saviour, by repeating the first verse of this psalm, made the application of the whole to himself.

to save him. — Jesus again crying with a loud voice; 50. 51. 52.
breathed out his soul. Immediately the veil of the 53.
temple separated; all nature seemed convulsed;
the earth trembled; the rocks rent; and many bodies
of saints arose, and appeared, after his resurrection,
in Jerusalem. Astonishment, in the mean time, seized 54.
the guards; and the centurion who attended, cried
out in horror, Surely this person was the offspring of
some God.

In the evening, Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man, 55. 56. 57.
who had attended the ministry of Jesus, having ob- 58. 59. 60.
tained Pilate's leave, piously took the body from the 61.
cross, and wrapping it in fine linen, laid it in a tomb,
which he had hewn for himself in a rock. He then
closed the mouth with a large stone, which had been

50. The different evangelists express the act of Christ's dying
by different words. St. Matthew's is the most remarkable, *αφ' ου
το πνεμα* he *dismissed his soul*. This exactly suitable to his words
in John x. 18.

51. Sandys and Maundrel both speak of fissures in the rocks,
which they had seen at Jerusalem; and which are supposed to
have been rent at this time. Nay, we are told, that a deity lately
travelling through Palestine, was converted by seeing one of them,
(Fleming's, Christol. v. ii. p. 97.). That the fissures, which
now exist, were made in the rocks at the time of our Saviour's
death is matter of conjecture only: but that they have been
made by some natural convulsion, is very evident from the corre-
spondent sides of the chasms.

54. This exclamation from a heathen soldier, is much of the
same import with that which Virgil puts in the mouth of Dido on
seeing Æneas;

Credo equidem (nec vana fides) genus esse deorum.

It is not improbable, however, that this officer might before
have heard much of Jesus and of his pretensions; and might
now be thoroughly converted by these grand events. If so, his
exclamation should receive a Christian rather than a heathen inter-
pretation.

60. Burying criminals was not only allowed, but enjoined by the
Jewish law, Deut. xxi. 22.

fitted to it. — This mournful solemnity was attended by Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, who, with other women, had accompanied Jesus from Galilee, and had been spectators, at a distance, of the whole event.

- 62.63 64. The next morning, which was the day after the passover, the chief priests and elders went to Pilate, and begged he would set a guard over the sepulchre ; For this impostor, said they, in his lifetime, declared that he would rise again on the third day ; and if his disciples should carry off the dead body in the night, and say he was risen, it might occasion greater mischief than any that had yet happened. Pilate gave them leave to use what means they pleased, and what soldiers they thought necessary. Having sealed up the sepulchre, therefore, with great care, they left it with full security, under a sufficient guard.
- 65.

CHAP. Very early the next morning, which was the first
 XXVIII. day of the week, Mary Magdalen, and the other
 1. 2. 3. 4. women, went to the sepulchre, with an intention to embalm the body. But to their great astonishment, they found the sepulchre laid open ; rent, as it seemed,

1. There is considerable difficulty in reconciling the accounts of the several evangelists, with regard to the time when the women came to the sepulchre. For myself, I lay little stress on these unimportant variations. They who think the truth of Christianity more concerned in them, may find some satisfaction on this point, in Mr. West's observations on the resurrection ; and perhaps more in Dr. Benson's Life of Christ. — One observation may be made here, that if the women had known that the sepulchre was sealed and guarded, they would probably have thought every attempt vain to embalm the body. We must suppose, therefore, they knew nothing of that transaction.

by

by an earthquake. An angel, illuminating the place with splendor, sat upon the stone; and the guard, terrified into stupefaction, lay scattered about the ground like dead men. — Be not you afraid, said the angel to the women; I know whom you seek — your crucified Saviour. He is not here; but is risen, as he himself foretold. — Look at the place where the Lord lay; and go tell his disciples the great event; and that he will meet them in Galilee. — They, with fear and great joy, departing, met Jesus himself; and falling down at his feet; they worshiped him. Be not afraid, said he, continue your errand, and tell my brethren to meet me in Galilee.

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In the mean time, the guard, recovering from their terror, gave information to the chief priests of the whole transaction. The chief priests immediately called a council; and, after much debating, engaged the soldiers, by a promise of indemnity, and a large bribe, to give out, that the disciples stole away the body while they slept: and this story was long propagated among the unbelieving part of the Jewish nation.

11.

12. 13. 14.

15.

While these things were transacting, the disciples having received the commands of Jesus, left Jerusalem, and went into Galilee, to meet him on a mountain which he had appointed. There they saw him; and

16.

17.

13. The chief priests were not willing to bring the affair before Pilate; because, if he had dismissed the soldiers with impunity, it would have brought great credit to the truth of the resurrection. If the chief priests could have *proved any neglect*, there is no doubt but they would have prosecuted the soldiers to the utmost.

17. I explain the latter part of this verse on the authority of Beza, who, instead of *οι δε ιδυσαν*, some doubted, reads *οι δε ιδυσαν*

and all their doubts being cleared away, they worshipped him, and received his last instructions.

18 19, 20. All power, said Jesus, giving them his last charge, is entrusted to me, in heaven and on earth. Go you, therefore, under my authority, and baptise all nations, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to obey all the precepts, which, from time to time, I have given you; and though I am now about to leave you, be assured, that you shall always be under my particular influence and direction.

αδυνασαν, they doubted nothing. It is certainly a good emendation, but I know not on what authority it rests. — However, if the reading stand as in our translation, it is a difficulty of no great consequence. — Some explain it, as if they doubted at first, when they saw him at a distance; but on his coming nearer, their doubts vanished. St. Matthew's words lead rather to this meaning. *Και προσελθων ο Ιησους εμαλησεν αυτους*. But that appears to me too trifling a circumstance to lay any stress on.

END OF THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO

ST. MATTHEW.

THE GOSPEL
OF
SAINT MARK.

PREFACE

TO

ST. MARK'S GOSPEL.

SOME writers suppose, there are two persons mentioned in the New Testament of the name of Mark; and are at a loss which of them was the Evangelist. But Dr. Lardner, having examined all that hath been said on the subject, gives it plainly as his opinion, that there was only one person of that name.

Another dispute hath arisen with regard to the originality of St. Mark's gospel. Many suppose it to be only an epitome of St. Matthew. But there seems to be no good foundation for this supposition. It is true, St. Mark touches on few facts which St. Matthew does not mention; and he generally treats them in St. Matthew's order. His account also of most of these facts is less detailed than that of St. Matthew. But at the same time, it is obvious, that St. Mark dilates on some facts, which St. Matthew relates concisely; and often adds circumstances which St. Matthew omits. — In the second chapter, for instance, a number of circumstances are recorded with regard to the paralytic, which are not mentioned by St. Matthew: in the eighth chapter, some circumstances with regard to the miracle among

among the Gadarenes; and in the ninth, with regard to the transfiguration. In the twelfth, a much more circumstantial account is given of the Scribe: and in the same chapter, the widow's mite is mentioned, which is totally omitted by St. Matthew. It may be added also, that in some trifling instances the two evangelists vary; as in the fifth chapter St. Mark speaks of one demoniac; whereas St. Matthew mentions two. Several other little variations might be mentioned, which the reader may see collected in the seventh chapter of Dr. Lardner's account of the writers of the New Testament. — It is probable also, that if St. Mark had epitomized St. Matthew, he would not have left wholly untouched the circumstances of the birth of Christ — the sermon on the mount — and other particulars, which are so very remarkable in St. Matthew's gospel. — The general opinion is, that this gospel was revised by St. Peter, at Rome; and was written for the sake of the Christians there, who had probably never seen any other gospel.

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ST. MARK.

BEFORE the appearance of Jesus Christ, the prophecies of Malachi and Isaiah were fulfilled in John the Baptist : *Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, to prepare thy way before thee. The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord : make his paths straight.* CHAP. I.
1. 2. 3.

This holy man, austere and mortified in the whole manner of his life, frequented the desert parts of Judea ; and called men to repentance, as a necessary condition of forgiveness. — Many attended him, not only from the country of Judea, but from Jerusalem ; and, confessing their sins, were baptized. — With great earnestness he admonished them, in the course of his preaching, not to mistake him for the Messiah ; whose coming it was his business merely to declare. I, said he, baptize you only with water ; but he shall baptize you with the holy spirit of God. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8.

While John was thus preaching and baptizing in the wilderness, Jesus himself came to him to be 9. 10. 11.

2. Mal. iii. 1.

3. Isa. xi. 3.

baptized ; and, on this occasion, received a great and full testimony from God of his divine mission. As he ascended from the water, the clouds opened ; and a glorious light spreading round him, a divine voice was heard, *Thou art my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased.*

12. 13. After his baptism, Jesus was led, by an impulse of the spirit of God, into a desolate and solitary country, where he continued forty days in fasting, prayer, and temptation. Angels, in the mean time, ministered unto him.

14. 15. On the imprisonment of John, he went into Galilee, and there began to preach the gospel ; declaring that the establishment of the Messiah's kingdom, which had so long been foretold by the prophets, was now about to take place : and exhorting men to believe, and accept, by repentance and a change of heart, the gracious offers it made of salvation,

16. 17. 16. At the time when Jesus began to preach, he began also to choose disciples. Sincere people, among
19. 20. the lower ranks, were the objects of his choice. As he walked along the shores of the lake of Genesareth, he found two fishermen, Simon and Andrew, whom he took to be his disciples ; and alluding to their employment, told them, they should become

20. It is probable from St. John's account they had been before convinced by his miracles and doctrines.

fishers

fishers of men. Soon after, he chose two other fishermen, James and John, the sons of Zebedee. All four, leaving their business and relations, immediately followed him.

Accompanied by these attendants, he went to Capernaum, and taught in the synagogue on the sabbath. His divine discourse struck all who heard him with astonishment: for they easily perceived, that the doctrines he conveyed, and the authority with which he enforced them, were very different from the cold interpretations and glosses of the scribes.

It happened, as he was teaching in the synagogue, a man possessed with an evil spirit being present, cried out at the sight of him, acknowledging his divine power, and dreading the effects of it. Jesus having commanded the wicked spirit to leave him, the man, on suffering a violent convulsion, was perfectly restored. This great miracle had its proper effect on the multitude, who considered it as a confirmation of his doctrine, and spread his fame through the country.

From the synagogue Jesus retired with his disciples to the house of Simon, whose mother-in-law they found lying ill of a fever. Jesus immediately healing her, she attended them at supper.

24. Better translated, *What hast thou to do with us?*

32-33-34. These miracles drew multitudes of people about him in the evening, inasmuch that the whole city, in a manner, was gathered before the door, bringing with them many who laboured under bodily disorders, and many who were possessed with evil spirits; all of whom experienced the gracious effects of his almighty power. Nor would he suffer the evil spirits, though they knew him, to make him known. Such testimony he abhorred.

35. The next morning, rising before it was light, he retired to a secret place, to enjoy contemplation and
 36. 37. prayer. But his disciples soon after following, told him how impatiently the people expected his return.
 38. 39. Jesus, however, informing them, that he must not confine his labours to any one place, took a circuit round Galilee, preaching the gospel, and confirming
 40. the truth of it by miracles. — Among other objects of his compassion, it happened that a leper came to

32. *When the sun did set*: that is, when the sabbath was over; as the Jews were scrupulous about carrying burdens on the sabbath. The Jewish day was from evening to evening.

34. *Such testimony he abhorred.* There are different interpretations of this passage. Some suppose, that Jesus forbade them to speak, on the same principle on which he forbade the person he had healed to discover him, either as giving an example of modesty, or as preventing discovery. — Others suppose the evil spirits wished to have people believe their cause and that of Jesus was the same; as the Pharisees said, he casteth out devils by Belzebub. But it appears more consistent with the Messiah's character to abhor the testimony of wicked spirits, from the impropriety of the thing itself. Prophecy, miracles, and the purity of his doctrine were the proofs on which he rested his authority.

him,

him, and kneeling down, begged he would shew that divine power on him which he had shewn on many others. Jesus, healing him with a touch, ordered him to keep the matter private—to present himself to the priest who was the proper judge of his cure—and to offer what Moses commanded. But the man, in a transport of joy and gratitude, on finding himself so suddenly healed, took great pains in publishing the matter. Such crowds, therefore, resorted to Jesus in all the great towns, that he was obliged to retire to solitary places, where such only as were under the influence of higher motives than curiosity attended him.

Some days after, he returned to Capernaum. This was presently known; and numbers of people came to him, whom, as usual, he instructed. While the people thus crowded around him, it happened that a paralytic was brought to be healed. As the men who carried him could not easily get at Jesus

CHAP.

II.

1. 2.

3.

4.

44. See a note on Matt. viii. 4.

4. The eastern houses were flat at the top, where was commonly a door, which communicated with the inside of the house. Often there was a ladder or stairs on the outside, which must have been the case with the house described Mark, xiii. 15. The door may be supposed to be fastened, and the word *εἰσέλθαι* may signify, they burst it open. Dr. Shaw gives us the form of the Barbary houses at this time, which are often square buildings, inclosing an *impavium*, or court-yard. This in hot or rainy weather is covered with an awning, fastened to the four corners of the parapet-wall. He supposes, therefore, that the sick man was carried to the top of the house, where his friends opening the awning, let him down (*διὰ τὴν κεραμίδα*, by the side of the roof, Luke v. 18.) before Jesus.

through the crowd, they went round the house, and finding access to the roof, they opened a private door, and let down the sick man, together with his couch, into the room before Jesus. Jesus, seeing such an instance of faith, told the sick man, his sins were forgiven. — In the room at that time, were sitting several of the Scribes, who did not care to speak openly, but in their hearts had great indignation at what they esteemed so blasphemous a speech. Jesus, knowing their thoughts, asked them, Whether it were easier to forgive the man's sins, or to heal his disease? But that you may be assured, said he, I can do the first, you shall see me perform the second. On this, with a word speaking, he healed the man so perfectly, that he rose up, and carried away his bed, to the great astonishment of all present, who glorified God, declaring, that Jesus was such a prophet as had not yet appeared.

13. From this frightened place, Jesus led the multitude to an open situation by the side of the lake, and there preached the gospel to them.

14. After he had sent them away, he passed by one of the tax-gatherer's booths, which belonged to Matthew, the son of Alpheus; who, on Jesus's expressing a desire to take him with him as a disciple, left his gainful employment and followed without delay. —

5. See a note on Matt. ix. 2.

14. He too, it is probable, as the other disciples, had been before convinced by the doctrine and miracles of Jesus.

From hence Jesus went to his house, where he sat down at table with many of Matthew's former acquaintance, people of loose morals and ordinary reputation. The Scribes and Pharisees, observing this, inquired of his disciples, Why their master demeaned himself by conorting with such disreputable people? — Jesus asked them, Whether the healthy or the sick had more need of a physician? and added, that his errand in this world was to apply himself rather to the sinner than to the righteous.

On an occasion of the same kind, the disciples of John the Baptist, and of the Pharisees, came to him, expressing their wonder that he bred up his followers with so little austerity. — I consider my disciples, said Jesus, like the friends of a bridegroom at a marriage: they mix in the indulgences of the marriage-feast, but never suppose these indulgences are to last through life. Worldly habits must be broken by degrees. I cannot expect my disciples to break theirs at once. A new patch suits ill with an old garment; and new wine with old vessels.

Some time after, as Jesus was walking, on the sabbath-day, through a corn-field, his disciples, being hungry, plucked the ears of corn, and rubbing them in their hands, began to eat. It happened that some of the Pharisees saw the action; and taking great

22. See a note with regard to the manner in which the ancients preserved wine, Matt. ix. 17.

25. offence at such a profanation of the sabbath, men-
 tioned it to Jesus. — Is not the example of David,
 answered Jesus, sufficient to convince you, that, in
 cases of necessity, a liberty may be taken with a po-
 26. sitive institution? David went into the house of
 God, you are informed, and not only eat the shew-
 bread himself, but distributed it also among his fol-
 lowers; though the law ordains that it should be
 27. eaten only by the priests. The same liberty, there-
 fore, which David, in a *case of necessity*, took with
 the temple, you may also take with the sabbath; for
 the sabbath was made for man, not man for the sab-
 bath. And if David's example is not sufficient to
 28. convince you, know farther, that the son of man is
 Lord of the sabbath.

CHAP.
 III.

1.
 2.
 3. 4.

On another sabbath, as Jesus was in a synagogue,
 a man happened to be there with a withered hand;
 which some of the Pharisees observing, were on the
 watch whether he would heal him. Jesus, knowing
 their thoughts, called the man forth into the middle
 of the congregation; and then turning to the Phari-
 sees, asked them, whether they thought the sabbath
 was better observed by doing a good action, or by
 meditating a wicked one? — This obliging them
 either to deny the plain truth; or to condemn them-
 5. selves: they held their peace. — Jesus moved with

26. Abiathar was not high priest at that time, see 1 Sam. xxi. 1,
 but the expression may easily signify, in the days of Abiathar, who
 was afterwards high-priest.

displeasure and grief, at such an instance of obstinacy and hardness of heart, ordered the man to stretch out his hand; which he did, and instantly found it restored. — The Pharisees, abashed beyond the power of reply, left the synagogue; and plotted in secret with the Herodians how they might destroy him. 6.

Jesus in the mean time retired to the side of the lake, where many people, from the coasts near Tyre and Sidon on one side, and from Judea on the other, resorted to him, bringing with them, as usual, such as were possessed and diseased. He healed their several infirmities, and enjoined silence on the evil spirits. But being crowded and pressed by the people, and not able to speak to them commodiously, he got into a boat, and taught them from thence. 7.8.9.10. 11.12.

Jesus, about this time, calling a number of his particular followers to him, chose twelve, whom he meant to be the witnesses of his actions, and his 13.14.15. 16.17.18. 19.20.21.

17. Why our Saviour called James and John by the name of Boanerges does not any where appear: nor do I meet with any conjecture worth taking notice of.

19. Dr. Clark says, he carried them home with him to his own house; and tells us, it is plain from Matt. iv. 13. that *Jesus had a house of his own*. — I think it rather appears from Jesus's own account, that *he had no where to lay his head*. — Besides, I am not fond at any rate of entering into these particulars. If Jesus had a house of his own, it leads to many low and trivial inquiries, Whether he kept servants? How that house was furnished, &c.? which introduce low domestic ideas, and tend rather to depreciate the dignity of that great character. *Obscurity* is often one of the great sources of the *sublime*; and an investigation of *circumstances* leads to *littleness*.

assistants

assistants in preaching the gospel. — In consequence of this appointment, he gave them power to heal diseases, and to cast out evil spirits. Their names were Simon (whom he called Peter), James, John, Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James, the son of Alphaeus, Jude, Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot. — With these twelve Jesus returned to Capernaum, where the multitude, as usual, prevented his taking even the common refreshments of nature; at which his friends were not a little uneasy, fearing he might faint.

22. In the mean time, a body of Scribes, who came from Jerusalem, endeavoured to destroy the force of
 23. his miracles, by ascribing them to the devil. — Jesus asked them, how they thought it possible that the
 24. 25. 26. devil should conspire against himself? His kingdom, in that case, he told them, like a house or government divided against itself, must inevitably perish.

21. Dr. Whitby has shewn, in several instances, that the word *ἐξορῆ* (which is here rendered *to faint*) has often this meaning. And as it comes immediately after we are told that Jesus *could not so much as eat bread*, it appears as if there was a connection between the two expressions. — On the other hand, *ἐξορῆ* is certainly capable of receiving the sense given in our translation; and in this sense it seems connected with the words which follow. His friends said *he was beside himself*; but the Pharisees said still worse, *that he had a devil*. — Bp Pearce gives a third sense. He translates *lay hold into keep off*; and *him into it*; which the words, he says, will easily bear. The sense then is, *His friends seeing the multitude press on him, went out to keep them off*. — This I think, is rather forced. — Bowyer conjectures that *sayon* does not imply what *his friends said*, but what *they said*, or what was commonly reported: but I cannot see the connection of this alteration. — On the whole, I prefer Dr. Whitby's interpretation.

When

When you see the goods of a strong man, said he, 27.
 destroyed, you naturally conclude, that he who de-
 stroyed them was still stronger. How is it then that
 you do not with the same readiness suppose, when
 you see the devil dispossessed, that he who dispos-
 sesses him has superior power? To ascribe, therefore, 28. 29. 30.
 to the devil, these miracles, so evidently
 wrought by the finger of God, is among those sins
 which are the most difficult to repent of, and of
 course the most difficult to be forgiven.

On an occasion which happened about this time, 31. 32.
 Jesus shewed in how inconsiderable a light he held
 all earthly connections, in comparison of those form-
 ed by piety and religion. As the crowd pressed
 around him, his mother and other relations desired
 to speak with him; which was signified to him by
 the people who sat near. Jesus turning round to his
 disciples, and to those who seemed the most atten-
 tive, told them, that no earthly relationship had any
 weight with him, compared with that heavenly at-
 tachment, which was formed by souls united to him
 by doing the will of God,

Some time after, Jesus retiring again to the side, CHAP.
 of the lake, and the multitude crowding upon him, IV.
 he got into a boat, and preached to them from
 thence. The truths he taught them were delivered 1.
 in parables; among which the most remarkable was
 that of the sower. — As a husbandman, said he, 3. 4.
 was sowing his seed, some of the grain fell upon the
 beaten

5. 6. beaten path, and were picked up by birds. Some again fell on rocky ground, covered slightly with earth, and soon sprang up; but as the sun grew hot, they were immediately scorched for want of soil.
7. Other grain fell among weeds, which grew up with them, and presently choked them. But some finding a good soil, properly prepared to receive them,
8. produced fruit in great abundance. — This parable Jesus recommended very particularly to the attention
9. of the people. — Afterwards, when he was alone with his disciples, they desired him to explain it.
10. To you, answered Jesus, the truths of the gospel may be plainly delivered, but to the prejudiced multitude I speak in parables; that they may be, as it were, their own instructors: for in them is fulfilled the prophet's denunciation, *This people hear indeed, but understand not; they see, but perceive not, so as to be converted and saved.* — The parable, however, said Jesus, is so easy as to want little explanation. The husbandman is the preacher of the gospel — and the different kinds of ground represent the various dispositions of those who receive it. The beaten path signifies those on whose hardened hearts the gospel makes no impression.
11. 12. The shallow soil, on which the seed was scorched, exhibits such as listen to the gospel at first with apparent joy; but as soon as the heat of persecution arises, their religion dies away. Again, the weedy soil, in which the seed was choked, is an emblem
13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.
12. Isa. vi. 9. See a note on Matt. xiii. 15.

of those who vainly endeavour to divide their affections between the gospel and the world. The consequence is, that the cares and pleasures of life generally in the end stifle the efforts of religion. Lastly, the good ground represents those who receive the gospel in the honesty and sincerity of their hearts, and live according to its rules. — It will be your parts hereafter, added Jesus, to manifest all these truths to the world. Though at present the undiscerning multitude cannot understand them, they are all intended for the future instruction of mankind. Pay a just attention therefore to what you hear; and be assured, that the more faithfully you distribute the word of truth to others, you shall receive it in the larger proportion yourselves. It is a treasure which, in the hands of those who possess it in abundance, shall continually increase; while they, who hold it but in scanty measure, may soon lose the little they possess.

To the parable of the sower, Jesus added other parables in his discourses to the people. Particularly he shewed the progress of the gospel under the following illustration. — The husbandman, said he, casteth his seed into the ground. He sleepeth, and

27. Καὶ καθεύδων, καὶ ἐγερταί, νύκτα, καὶ ἡμέραν. *He sleepeth, and riseth,* (in perfect security, and at his ease, according to the season,) *night and day* — that is, he does not concern himself any farther about the corn after it is sown! knowing that nature will do all that is requisite. Dormio, in Latin, has this sense. — Our Saviour was the greater sower of the seed; which afterwards, under the apostles, sprang up into so rich a harvest. — And thus the present ministers of the gospel often, it may be hoped, sow seed which may afterwards grow up, though it do not immediately appear.

- riseth, and pursueth his ordinary business. The seed, unobserved, continues growing on, till it hath attained, by imperceptible degrees, its full maturity. Then cometh the harvest, when it is cut
 30. 31. 32. down, and gathered into the barn. — For the gospel, added he, resembles a grain of mustard-seed; which is remarkable for being the least of all seeds when sown, and the greatest of all plants when grown up.
33. 34. In this manner Jesus instructed the people in parables, opening the truth by degrees to those who were too much prejudiced to hear it at once; and throwing out representations of future times, which might hereafter confirm the Christian in his faith. Every thing however he explained in private to his disciples.
35. 36. As the evening drew on, Jesus dismissed the multitude; and taking his disciples with him, fatigued as he was, got into a boat, which was preparing with several other little vessels, to pass the lake. —
37. In the midst of the passage a violent storm arose, and the lake was so agitated that they seemed in great
 38. 39. danger. Jesus himself was asleep; but being soon awakened by the terrified disciples, he rebuked the wind, saying, Peace, be still: and it was instantly
 40. calm. Jesus then chid their vain fears and want of

36. Bowyer reads it otherwise. He places a full stop after *away*; which makes the sense thus: *They take him* (i.e. with them). *When he was in the ship, and other ships with them, there arose, &c.*

faith; while they, without excuse, could only express their astonishment in exclamations to each other.

Jesus having landed on the coast of Gadara, was met by a demoniac. This unhappy man, since the time of his possession, had wandered day and night among the tombs, which were his only habitation; howling and cutting himself with stones. The neighbourhood, to which he was a great annoyance, had endeavoured to bind and secure him: but such was his amazing strength that chains had been ineffectual. This person, fierce as he was, on seeing Jesus, ran towards him with marks of respect and submission, calling him by his name; giving him the title of the son of God; and beseeching him not to torment him and drive him out of the country. — Jesus, ordering the evil spirit to leave the man, asked his name? He was answered, that no name could suit so numerous a possession but that of Legion. — It happened, that near the place a great herd of swine was feeding; into which the evil spirits besought Jesus that he would suffer them to enter. On receiving permission, the whole herd, which consisted of about two thousand, rushed down the precipice into the lake, and were drowned. — The keepers of the swine presently spread abroad this great event; and people

CHAP.

V.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

6. 7. 8. 9.

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14. 15.

5. The Jewish tombs were artificial caverns cut in rocks. See Mark xv. 46.

7. Better translated, *What hast thou to do with me?*

13. See remarks on this miracle, Matt. viii. 32.

from all parts came crowding to the lake, where
 16. they saw the demoniac sitting, perfectly restored;
 and heard on the spot the circumstances of the
 17. whole affair : but struck with fear, they desired Jesus
 18. 19. 20. to leave the country. He seeing the time of their
 conversion not yet come, prepared to depart. The
 demoniac wished to accompany him, but Jesus left
 him behind as a witness of the greatness of the
 miracle which he had performed.

21. Jesus had scarce arrived at the other side of the
 lake when the multitude flocked together again to
 22. 23. receive him. Among them a person of superior dig-
 nity, a ruler of the synagogue, whose name was
 Jairus, came forward ; and falling at his feet, besought
 him to heal his daughter, who lay at the point of
 24. death. Jesus immediately went with him, followed,
 as usual, by a great multitude.

25. 26. 27. As the crowd pressed upon him, a woman, taking
 28. 29. the advantage of it, came behind him, and pri-
 vately touched his garment. She had been afflicted
 twelve years with a bloody flux, which had been
 deemed incurable : but hearing of the fame of Jesus,
 she was fully persuaded that even this touch would
 be sufficient to effect her cure. She found it so,
 30. and was instantly healed. — But Jesus, knowing the
 fact, and not choosing that such an instance of faith
 should pass unobserved, turned round, and asked his

17. See a note on the parallel place in Matt. viii. 34.

19. See a note on Matt. xiv. 36.

disciples, who had touched him? They seemed to wonder at the question, as the multitude was pressing him in every part. But as Jesus continued to look round, the woman finding she could not pass undiscovered, fell down before him, and confessed the truth. Jesus bidding her not be afraid, commended her faith, and sent her away perfectly restored.

During this interruption, a messenger met Jairus, informing him that his daughter was dead; and that it was needless to trouble Jesus any farther. Jesus, turning to the afflicted parent, bad him only believe, and he should see the power of God. — When they came to the house, Jesus told the mourners, who had begun their customary lamentations, that their grief was unnecessary, for the young woman was only asleep. At this they were ready to deride him, knowing she was dead. But he, removing all from the chamber, except three of his disciples, Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the young woman, took her by the hand, and bad her rise: on which she not only returned to life, but instantly recovered her health and strength. Jesus ordered that something should be given her to eat; and forbad her parents to divulge the matter.

Soon after, Jesus leaving Capernaum, went to Nazareth, where he had spent his youth: and going

CHAP.
VI.
1. 2. 3.

38. See a note on Matt. ix. 23.

43. See a note on Matt. viii. 4.

into the synagogue on the sabbath-day, he taught the people, as he had done in other places. At first, they were astonished at the wisdom and power with which he spake: but their prejudices soon overcoming their candour, they took great offence. Is not this, they cried, the carpenter? And are not all his mean relations among us? Whence came he by such wisdom and authority? — Jesus grieved at the prejudices of these unhappy people, who thus withstood their true interest, told them, It was no new thing for a prophet to suffer indignity in his own country: and finding them at present in no disposition to receive the gospel, he wrought only a few miracles on those whose faith made them proper objects of his power; and leaving Nazareth, went to preach in other parts of the country.

7. At the same time he sent the twelve apostles to different places, giving them power to confirm their doctrine by miracles. Make no preparation, said he, 8. 9. of unnecessary things for your journey. Where you 10. are kindly received in any town, there remain, till 11. you leave it; and where you are persecuted, leave your persecutors to the judgment of God. You have done all that is required: and they must answer for the sin of resisting such means of conviction as So-

7. St. Mark says, our Saviour sent out the apostles *two by two*; which indeed seems to have been the most proper mode of confirming their testimony; as *out of the mouth of two witnesses every word is established*. Matt. xviii. 16.

dom and Gomorrha never had. — With these instructions the apostles departed, and found themselves enabled both to preach the gospel, and to confirm the truth of it by miracles. 12. 13.

The fame of Jesus was, by this time, spread 14. 15. 16. through the country; and various were the opinions of men about him. Some thought him Elijah, or one of the old prophets arisen from the dead — and many conceived, that if he were not one of the old prophets, he was at least a prophet of equal authority. But the opinion of Herod was the most singular. He had just put John the Baptist to death; and, in the agitation of a guilty conscience, cried out, This is certainly that righteous man whom I beheaded: he is risen again, and enabled to perform these mighty works.

13. In the original it is said; they *anointed with oil many that were sick*: and the same expression is used by St. James (v. 14.). In these passages the papists find their sacrament of *extreme unction*. — But how? Our Saviour often used an external action in working a miracle; but it was never conceived that the virtue lay in the external action: — nor that the external action, independent of the virtue, was of any value. They may just as well say that making clay is a sacrament, because Jesus cured the eyes of a blind man with it. — Among the ancients, *unction* was thought a good remedy in many cases. Celsus recommends it: *Ungi corpus in acutis, et recentibus oportet*. De Med. ii. 14. Galen also observes, that *Unctioes adversus vim febrium auxilium esse*. (Com. 4. in Hippoc.) The apostles therefore might use a common external action in effecting a miraculous cure. The action could not depreciate the miracle, as the cure was instant; and, in the mean time, this obvious lesson was inculcated, that we ought to use the means which God Almighty hath put in our power; and trust him with the event, who can only render them effectual. *The apostles*, (says Lightfoot, Heb. and Talm. Exer. v. 11. p. 162.) *used an ordinary medicine, and obtained an extraordinary effect*.

17. 18. 19. The circumstances of John's death were these. —
 20. Herod had long had a veneration for him; and, on many occasions, had shewn a deference to his advice. But, on one occasion, he took great offence. He lived, at that time, in a state of incest with Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; for which John, with great freedom, had reproved him. This immediately drew on John the resentment of Herodias, through whose instigation Herod imprisoned him; but could not be
 21. prevailed on to put him to death. It happened, however, at a great feast, which Herod had made on his
 22. 23. birth-day, that the daughter of Herodias, dancing before the king, pleased him so much, that, in the gaiety of his heart, he promised, with an oath, to
 24. 25. grant any request she should make. Being instructed by her mother, she demanded the head of John the
 26. Baptist. The king was mortified at the request; but for the sake of the oath he had taken in so public
 27. 28. a manner, he granted what she asked. An executioner was sent to behead John; and the head was given to
 29. the daughter, who carried it to her mother. — The disciples of John afterwards obtained leave to bury the corpse.
30. The twelve apostles, in the mean time, returning to Jesus from their several missions, gave him an account of the miracles they had wrought, and of the
 31. 32. success of their ministry. They were then in a place of much resort; and Jesus wishing to be more private

27. *A convenient day* is a bad translation: it should be a *feſtival*, or *rejoicing day*.

went with them into a boat, intending to land in a retired place. But the people observing from the shore the course of the boat, pursued it from all parts; so that, on his landing, he found a great multitude assembled. He was moved, therefore, with compassion at a crowd, who appeared, he said, like sheep without a shepherd: and though he was hungry and fatigued, and had retired to that lonely place merely for refreshment, he began again the toil of instructing them, which he continued to a late hour. — The disciples, however, reminded him, as the evening drew on, of the inconveniences that might ensue, on keeping the people fasting so long in that desolate country. — Do you then, said Jesus, give them provisions. — That appeared impossible. — On this, Jesus asked what quantity of provision they had? — They answered, only five loaves and two small fishes. He then ordered his disciples to separate the people, and make them sit down in companies of about fifty or a hundred together. When they were all thus disposed, he took the bread and fish; and giving thanks, distributed them, through the hands of his disciples, among the multitude. And though there were about five thousand people, yet they were not

33.34.35.
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39. 40.

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42.43.44.

40. The word *companies* expresses the original perhaps better than *ranks*. — Some suppose they sat down in companies which contained an hundred; and that there were fifty of these companies; so that the whole multitude might easily be counted, according to the text, by hundreds, and by fifties. Fifty times an hundred makes five thousand.

only fully satisfied, but left behind them fragments, which filled twelve baskets.

45. He then bad his disciples get into a boat, and pass over to Bethsaida, a town at the north end of the lake, and leave him to dismiss the people; which having done, he retired, to enjoy in solitude contemplation and prayer.
47. 48. In the mean time, night advancing, and the wind being boisterous and contrary, Jesus saw from the shore the disciples in difficulty and danger, and went to them, walking on the surface of the lake. They supposing him to be a spirit, cried out with fear, till they knew his voice, bidding them not be afraid. As soon as he entered the boat, the wind ceased; while they, forgetting the miracle of the loaves, were as much astonished as if they had been totally unacquainted with his power. — They soon after landed in the country of Gennefaret; where Jesus being presently known, great crowds, from all the towns and villages in the neighbourhood, came to him, bringing sick people; whom they laid down in roads and streets wherever he passed, desiring only to touch his cloaths. Such instances of faith never passed unrewarded.
53. 54.
55. 56.

CHAP. VII. In the mean time, the fame of Jesus, thus every where increasing, gave great offence to the leading doctors of the law; and a body of them came from

48. See a note on Matt. xiv. 15.

3. See a note on Matt. xv. 2.

Jerusalem, on purpose to watch, and find out some pretence against him. His neglect of traditions afforded the best. The tradition, particularly, which enjoined the washing of hands before a meal, or after having been in mixed company, was religiously observed by the Pharisees, as a point of sanctity, beyond what the law required; and tended, among other exactnesses of the same kind, to gain them reverence with the people. — They came, therefore, to Jesus, and publicly reprov'd him for bringing up his disciples in a thorough neglect of this, among other holy observances. — But Jesus bad them remember what the prophet Isaias had said of their fathers; which might be considered likewise as prophetic of them: *This people honoureth me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.* Do not you, said Jesus, set up, in the most flagrant manner, your own traditions against the commandments of God? You know how strictly the law enjoins honouring your parents, for instance, which is a duty enforced even by the penalty of death. But your tradition gives the people to understand,

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6. 7.

8. 9.

10.

11. 12. 13.

6. It is not clear, whether the prophet does not speak here *directly* of the times of the Messiah.

9. *Full well ye reject.* Καλως ἀθετεῖτε. Ye totally reject.

11. The word *Corban*, signified any sacred offering; and the Jews adopted the word into a vow. As, for instance, a man would say to his parent, *It is Corban, whatever advantage you might receive of me*; it then became sacrilege to apply that thing to private use. Josephus tells us (*Antiq. Jud. lib. iv. cap. 4.*) the priests could absolve from this vow; for which they required a fee of fifty shekels.

that if, instead of assisting their parents, they put their money into the treasury of the temple, it is more acceptable to God; thus making the commandment of no effect. Many other things of a similar nature might be mentioned. — Then turning from the Pharisees to the people, Jesus told them it was his business to give them juster notions of pollution than any they received from Pharisaical traditions. No external uncleanness, said he, pollutes a man. It is what comes from his heart, that is his great pollution; and to which you ought all particularly to attend.

17. Jesus then left the multitude, and retired into a house, where his disciples desired him to explain to them what he had said to the people about pollution. 18.19.20. — Jesus expressing his surprise at their wanting information on so easy a subject, shewed them how impossible it was that any *moral* stain should arise from *external* pollution, because it had no connection with the *heart*. But bad thoughts, said he, and all kinds of wickedness, have a connection with the heart, and effectually pollute a man. 21.22.23.

24. From Gennefaret, Jesus removed to the borders of Tyre and Sidon, where he went privately into a house, and wished for a while to be concealed from

17. The difficulty with the disciples probably was some confusion between legal or ceremonial uncleanness, and that of the heart.

the people. But it was impossible. A heathen woman 25. 26.
of that country, having heard of his being there, came
to him, begging his assistance to cure her daughter,
who was an unhappy demoniac. Jesus, desirous to 27.
exhibit an instance of Gentile faith, told her, he was
not sent to the heathen, but to the Jews. It is not
right, said he, to take the children's bread, and cast
it to dogs. She, continuing the figure, answered, 28.
True, Lord; but the dogs under the table may, with-
out offence, eat the children's offals. — An answer, 29. 30.
so full of faith and knowledge, drew a high com-
mendation from Jesus, and an assurance, that she
should find, (as she did) her daughter perfectly re-
covered,

From the borders of Tyre and Sidon, Jesus's next 31.
journey was through the country of Decapolis, to
the lake of Tiberias. — As the multitude gathered 32.
round, a man deaf and dumb was brought to him
to be restored, Jesus, taking him a little aside, 33.
touched his ears and mouth; and looking up to 34.
heaven, cried out, *Be opened*; on which an instant 35. 36.
cure was effected. Jesus bringing the man to the
people, forbade them to publish the matter abroad,

27. See Matthew xv. 26.

33. The text says, *He spit, and touched his tongue*. This action
is mentioned in two other places, Mark viii. 23.; and John ix. 6.
It has to us an indelicate appearance: but we must not criticise
the manners which prevailed two thousand years ago, by those of
our own age. Our Saviour often used some *outward sign*; why
this was chosen it is impossible for us to know.

36. See a note on Matt. viii. 4.

This prohibition, however, was but ill-observed: for they were above measure astonished; and seemed more struck with this miracle than with any they had yet seen.

CHAP.
VIII.

The people having now been on the spot three days, and having spent all their provision, Jesus called his disciples to him, and told them he was unwilling to send them away fasting, as many of them came from a great distance, and might suffer through hunger. The disciples not considering the miracle he had so lately wrought, immediately mentioned again the difficulty of feeding such a number in so desolate a place. But Jesus finding they had seven loaves and a few small fishes, ordered the people to sit down; and giving thanks, he distributed the provision among them. After they were all satisfied, though they consisted of at least four thousand, as much offal remained as filled seven baskets. — Jesus then dismissing them, took boat, and landed on the coast of Dalmanutha.

At this place a body of Pharisees came to him: and expressing themselves dissatisfied with the miracles he had yet wrought, which shewed his power only over *earthly things*, demanded the evidence of a

2. These three days, according to the Jewish mode of reckoning, might be only two nights and one day. Nor need we suppose that all the multitude staid even that time, but were continually coming and going; yet still, as *many of them came from far, and had nothing to eat*, they were objects of compassion.

figs

sign from heaven.—Jesus, grieved at their obstinacy and malice, refused to gratify their curiosity; and leaving them, took boat again, and repassed the lake. 12. 13.

It happened, that the disciples having forgotten to take with them a sufficient supply of bread, were communicating the neglect to each other, when Jesus bad them beware of *the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Herodians*. Struck with the word *leaven*, they immediately conceived that Jesus, (who had in fact admonished them against Pharisaical doctrines) had reproved their neglect in not taking bread. He rebuked their worldly-mindedness therefore, and bad them consider the two great miracles he had lately wrought to supply the necessities of so many thousand people.—The boat landed them at Bethsaida, where a blind man was soon after brought to them. Jesus taking him a little out of the town, and touching his own tongue with the end of his finger, laid it on the man's eye. An imperfect vision was at first produced; but, on a second touch, the man was perfectly restored. Jesus then sending him home, forbad him to return to the town, or publish what he had done. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26.

From

23. See a note on Mark vii 33.

26. See a note on Matt. viii. 4.

26. The peculiar secrecy which attended this miracle, Dr. Clark, and others, ascribe to *Jesus's knowing the impenitence and unworthiness of the people of Bethsaida*. But unless the motives of our Saviour's actions, at least when there is any harshness in them,

27. From Bethsaida Jesus travelled through the towns in the neighbourhood of Cæsarea Philippi: and on the road, asked his disciples the opinion of people
28. in general about him? The disciples answered,
29. that some said he was John the Baptist — and others Elijah, or one of the prophets. But, said Jesus, Whom do you suppose me to be? Peter, with great warmth, answered, He believed him to be the Messiah.
30. Jesus, however, for his own private reasons, ordered them at present to keep that truth to themselves.
31. 32. On this occasion, for the first time, he began to prepare his disciples for the great event which was now approaching. I must suffer, said he, many things: my doctrine, and offers of salvation shall be rejected by the Jewish rulers; and in the end I shall be put to death: but, on the third day, be assured I will rise again. — Peter having no conception of these things, and having his mind wholly occupied with worldly considerations, expressed in
33. vehement language his disappointment. — Jesus rebuked him with more than his usual severity on this occasion, as a person who opposed the great dispensations of God.

them, are very plain, it is perhaps as well to be silent about them. We know he often did work miracles before *unworthy people*; and even at Bethsaida in particular, he did *many mighty works*. Matt. xi. 21. We may well suppose that many of our Saviour's motives may be hid from us.

30. See a note on Matt. viii. 4.

Having

Having thus spoken more plainly to his *disciples* 34.
 than he had ever done before, he spoke also more
 plainly to the *people*. He took an occasion to tell
 them, that his followers must not expect their hap-
 piness from the pleasures and advantages of this
 life: but must pursue his steps through self-denials
 and afflictions; and must consider their true loss and 35.
 gain, not as they are connected with this world,
 but as they are connected with the next. For what 36.
 would it profit a man, said he, if he should gain the
 whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall 37.
 a man give in exchange for his soul? Let not there- 38.
 fore the reproaches, the contempt, or the example of
 bad men, deter you, from the belief and practice of
 your religion; but look forward to that time when you
 may with confidence meet the son of man in all his
 glory. Even before this generation shall pass away
 you shall see evident signs of the power of the
 Messiah's kingdom. CHAP. IX. 1.

Jesus having thus given his disciples a distant view 2. 3. 4.
 both of his sufferings and of his glory, thought it
 proper to awaken their hopes still more forcibly by a
 visible representation. Taking with him therefore
 Peter, James, and John, he ascended a lofty moun-
 tain, and was transfigured before them. In the
 midst of a resplendent light, his whole person as-
 sumed a dazzling lustre; and he appeared supported,
 on his right and left, by the two great prophets of
 the law, Moses and Elijah, both in the same lu-
 minous

- minous form, who seemed in earnest conversation with him. — The disciples, transported with a variety of passions, wonder, joy, and fear, knew not where they were. Peter in a sort of ecstatic agitation, wished to fix this glorious scene. Let us build, said he, three tabernacles — one for You — another for
5. 6. **Moses** — and a third for **Elijah** — While he spake, a cloud spread over the illumination; and a voice issued from it, This is my beloved son, hear him.
7. — The cloud instantly dispersing, the vision was gone? and Jesus was left alone, standing with the three disciples, as before.
- 8.
9. As they descended the mountain, Jesus enjoined them to say nothing of what they had seen till after
10. his resurrection. This injunction they determined to observe; but at the same time, could not conceive what he meant by his resurrection. They had
11. other scruples also. As the Scribes said, that **Elijah** must precede the **Messiah**; why should they not convince them, by telling them (what had just now happened) that **Elijah** was already come? — Jesus
12. told them, that it was indeed predicted that **Elijah** should precede the **Messiah**, and prepare all things for his reception; and that afterwards the **Messiah**
13. himself should suffer death. But that, in fact, the

9. See a note on Matt. viii. 4.

11. This sense, which is adopted by some commentators, is, I think, the best.

predicted Elijah had already appeared; and had already suffered. — They now easily perceived, that Jesus spake of John the Baptist, who was to *appear in the spirit and power of Elijah*.

When Jesus arrived near the bottom of the mountain, he saw a great crowd assembled about his disciples, and some Scribes earnestly engaged in conference with them. But when he appeared, he immediately drew the respect and attention of the whole assembly, which they discovered by great emotions of joy. — Jesus turning to the Scribes, asked them, On what they were questioning his disciples? — On this, a person from the crowd told him, he was questioning them about a son of his, who lay under the misfortune of a very grievous possession. I brought him here, said he, with an expectation of finding you: and in your absence, I applied to your disciples: but they cannot relieve him. — Then Jesus rebuking his disciples for their want of faith, ordered the young man to be brought to him: and asked his father (as he brought him forward, in the agony of a violent convulsion) how long he had suffered under that great calamity? — From his childhood, answered the father; and sometimes he is even much worse than you now see

15. The original says, *they were greatly amazed*; which some interpreters suppose was owing to the shining appearance of his face, like that of Moses, when he came down from the mountain. But I think this, refinement.

him;

- him ; and is in frequent hazard from fire, or water, or any thing he comes near, that is dangerous. But if you have power to heal him, have compassion on our distress. — Do you believe that I am able? said Jesus. No man ever trusted in God without meeting his reward. — Lord, I believe, said the unhappy parent, with a burst of tears: help my infirmity, if there be any deficiency in my faith.
- Jesus then seeing the crowd closing together from every part, rebuked the evil spirit with authority, and ordered it to leave the young man, and enter no more into him. On this, he was seized with a convulsion, and terribly agitated through his whole frame ; till nature being quite spent, he sank down totally inanimate, inasmuch that many thought him dead. But Jesus taking him by the hand, raised him up perfectly restored.
- After this, Jesus retiring from the multitude into a house, his disciples privately asked him, Why they were unequal to the work which he had just performed? Merely, said Jesus, through the want of those purified affections, and that ardent faith, which alone can work such miracles as these.
- Soon after this, Jesus determining to go to Jerusalem, passed through Galilee ; wishing to go as privately, and meet with as little interruption as possible.
- In the way he reminded his disciples of what he had before told them — that he should be delivered into the hands of his enemies, who would put him

to death ; but on the third day he should rise from the dead. — What he said, however, made little impression on them ; except to raise in their hearts some ambitious views : for they had no clear idea of the Messiah's kingdom, and were afraid to ask for explanations. — Jesus left them to themselves during the journey ; but when he arrived at Capernaum, he called them to him, and asked them, What they had been disputing about on the road ? But they were silent ; for, in fact, they had been disputing which of them should be the greatest ? Jesus knowing their thoughts, told them, that the only way in which any man could be the greatest in his kingdom, was to consider him as the least. — He then took a child, and holding it in his arms, That person, said he, who wishes to be a member of my kingdom, must bring down his pride, his ambition, and all his worldly passions to such innocence as this. Nothing else can qualify him for it.

Here John, taking occasion from what his master had just said, told Jesus, they had seen a person endeavouring to cast out devils in his name ; but as he had not professed himself a disciple, they had forbidden him. — But Jesus disapproved their conduct. No man, said he, can attempt to work a miracle in my name who hath any enmity to my doctrine ; and I wish to consider every one as for me, who is not against me.

38. See a note on Matt. xii. 27.

41. 42. Jesus then resuming his discourse, told them that a regard or disregard to his doctrines should be the great test of the sincerity of mankind, wherever the gospel should be preached. The gospel, said he, no
 43. 44. 45. doubt, will bring its difficulties on men, and often
 46. 47. 48. interfere with the dearest of their worldly interests : but if they are true believers, and wish to avoid the guilt and punishment of apostacy, they must persevere. As the sacrifice is purified by salt, so is the
 49. professor of the gospel by his trials. The great truths
 50. you receive, are in themselves good : be you properly prepared to dispense them. — And that I may draw my discourse to what gave occasion to it, lay aside all jealousies and contentions about worldly matters, and live in perfect harmony with each other,

44. 46. 48. In these verses St. Mark uses several times the phrase, *where their worm dieth not ; and their fire is not quenched ;* which Dr. Rymer (Rev. rel. p. 155.) ingeniously supposes alludes to the two customs of *burying* and *burning* dead bodies. In one, the *worm* ; in the other, the *fire* consumes : but hereafter neither *worm* nor *fire* shall destroy.

49. 50. There is great difficulty in these verses. Bowyer wishes there was authority (which there is not) for reading, *πασα γαρ τροφα*, &c. Every *cake of flour* shall be salted, and every sacrifice shall be salted. — “ The difficulty of the two concluding verses of this chapter arises from a vivacity of imagination in the pursuit and application of metaphors ; a faculty in which the Orientals excelled and delighted. They pass suddenly from one idea to another, nearly, and sometimes remotely allied to it. They relinquished the primary sense for another suggested by it ; and without giving any notice, as we do, of our intention. These numerous *reflected lights*, as we may call them, eagerly caught at by the mind in its train of thinking, perplex the attention of a modern reader, and must be carefully separated by him if he would see the whole scope and purpose of many passages in the sacred writings.”

Bp. HURD'S Sermons.

as the only way to receive the benefit of that gospel which you teach.

Having passed through Galilee, Jesus entered Ju- CHAP.
dea, and soon found himself surrounded by a number X.
of people, whom, as usual, he instructed. — 1.
Among them were mixed several of the Pharisees, 2.
who, with a view to take advantage of what should
pass in his discourse, asked him, Whether it were law-
ful for a man to put away his wife? — The difficulty
lay in obliging him either, on one hand, to oppose
what was generally thought allowed by the law; or,
on the other, to contradict what they had often heard
was his own doctrine. — Jesus, aware of their ma- 3.
lice, asked them, What the law of Moses enjoined on
that head? — It enjoined only (they answered), that 4.
the husband should give the wife a bill of divorce. —
Jesus replied, it was true: but added, that Moses, 5.
in that matter, had been induced merely by the ne-
cessity of complying with a hardened people. You 6. 7. 8.
will recollect, said he, a law still more ancient than
that of Moses, which enjoins, in consequence of
God's *having made them male and female*, that *a man*
shall leave his father and mother, and cleave unto his
wife, and they two shall be one flesh. What God, 9.
therefore, hath joined together, let not man put
asunder.

Jesus having thus silenced the Pharisees, retired 10. 11. 12.
into a house, where his disciples desired him to speak
more plainly on the subject of marriage. He told

them, that his institution founded this matter on the original law of God, and totally forbid a dissolution of marriage, except merely in the case of adultery: in every other case, he esteemed both the man and the woman adulterers, on a second marriage, during the life of either party.

13. While Jesus continued in the house with his disciples, some people in the neighbourhood brought their children to him, desiring, according to a common custom among the Jews, that he would lay his hands upon them and bless them. The disciples, rather thinking this a troublesome intrusion, checked
14. 15. their forwardness. But Jesus, rebuking his disciples, bad them suffer the little children to be brought to him; for their innocence and simplicity of manners were the true emblems of those virtues, which must adorn every one who wished to be a member of his
16. kingdom. He then took them into his arms, laid his hands upon them, and blessed them.
17. Jesus, after this continuing his journey towards Jerusalem, was met by a person of some distinction, who, addressing him by the name of *good master*, desired to know by what means he might obtain ever-

11. See Matt. xix. 9.

12. A woman was not permitted to put away her husband by the Mosaic law: but it was often practised about the time of our Saviour; of which Josephus gives several instances. The celebrated case of Herodias was one, who left her husband Herod Philip, and was married to Herod Antipas.

lasting life? — Jesus observing, from the manner of 18.
 his address, that he acknowledged his divine preten-
 sions, thought proper to put him to a trial. He 19.
 asked him first how he had fulfilled his duty to his
 neighbour? Whether he had the breach of any com- 20.
 mandment on his conscience? The inquirer answering
 with great readiness on these heads, Jesus expressed 21.
 his satisfaction so far. But, said he, let me ask you
 one thing more: Have you faith enough in me (as
 you seem to acknowledge me to be the Messiah) to
 sell and give away all you have in this world, and
 trust in me for that everlasting life you are in quest
 of? — This was a harder trial than the young man 22.
 was prepared for. He was very rich; and being
 thoroughly disappointed at finding how great a sacri-
 fice he was to make, retired abruptly, without any
 reply.

How almost impossible is it, said Jesus, turning to 23.
 his disciples, for a rich man to become a sincere
 Christian! — The disciples expressing their surprize 24. 25.
 at what he said, he explained himself by adding, that
 the difficulty arose, not so properly from their having
 riches, as from their trusting in them — from their
 being so attached to them as this person was; who,
 when called on by his religion, could not give them
 up. It was impossible, he said, for any person, under
 the influence of such a disposition, to be a member
 of his kingdom: — The disciples still expressing 26. 27.

18. See a note on Matt. xix. 18.

their uneasiness with regard to the condition of rich men, Jesus explained himself farther, by observing that he spoke of mere men, unsupported by the grace of God ; but that all who endeavoured to please God, whether rich or poor, should feel themselves more and more strengthened by his gracious assistance.

28. Peter, encouraged by what his master had said, in the fullness of his heart, cried out, we have left all
 29. 30. and followed you. — To this Jesus made no particular reply, but in general said, that no man gave up his worldly connections and advantages for the sake of the gospel, who should not find his self-denials and persecutions (if he met with them) well repaid with a tranquil mind, a good conscience, a heavenly communication, and a sufficiency of all things, even in this world ; while, in the world to come, he might
 31. be assured of everlasting happiness. — But many, he added, who ought to put in the first claim to these heavenly advantages, would be found among the last ; while they, from whom less could be expected, would stand among the first.

32. 33. 34. Jesus by this time approached Jerusalem ; and his disciples fearing, from what he had frequently said, that some great event, though they knew not what, was about to take place, began to be apprehensive

31. Our Saviour seems chiefly to have had the Jews and Gentiles in his eye; the former of whom rejected the gospel, though it might have been expected they should have been the first to receive it, while the latter, from whom little could be expected, would receive it with great gladness.

and

and uneasy. Jesus, perceiving their distress, called them to him; and mentioning again those sufferings which he was now about to undergo at Jerusalem, repeated the assurance he had given them, that, after these sufferings were over, on the third day, he would rise again from the dead. — This assurance, though they knew not well the meaning of what their master had said, began, however, to raise their hopes; but, at the same time, it raised their ambition. They conceived his rising from the dead under some idea of temporal power; and two of them, James and John, who had often been distinguished by their master, thought they had a good pretence, at this time, to put in a claim for superior honours. — Jesus, gently rebuking them, told them, they knew not what they asked — that the passage to his kingdom led not through places of distinguished honours; but through sufferings and death — and that although they might, and he knew they would, pursue his painful steps; yet still the degrees of pre-eminence in heaven were not disposed of like honours upon earth, by favour and partiality; but were reserved for those, who, by their piety and perseverance, should make themselves worthy of them. 35.36.37. 38.39.40.

In the mean time, this forwardness in the two sons of Zebedee raised the jealousy of the other ten disciples, and gave Jesus a new opportunity of instructing them. It must not said he, be among you, as it is among the contenders for earthly honours. — They strive ambitiously for superior power and authority. Your strife must be of a different kind. He 41. 42.43.44.

among you who wishes to be the greatest, must make himself the least ; and consider humility as the principal qualification in obtaining superiority in my kingdom. You cannot surely expect more worldly authority than your master aspires after, who makes himself the servant of all, and lays down even his life as a ransom for the world.

46. Jesus, by this time, had arrived at Jericho ; and as he left that town, being attended by a great multitude of people, a blind man, of the name of Bartimeus, who sat begging by the road-side, hearing that
 47. Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, called out to him, by the title of the Messiah, and entreated his mercy.
 48. — The people, displeased at such importunity, endeavoured to repress it. But Jesus, coming to the
 49-50-51. place, ordered the man to be brought to him, and
 52. asked him, What benefit he particularly desired ? The man answered, with strong expressions of faith, that he might recover his sight. Jesus told him, his faith had made him an object of mercy, and immediately restored him ; on which the man joined the multitude, and followed Jesus,

CHAP. XI.
 1. 2. 3. 4. Soon after Jesus arrived at Bethphage and Bethany,
 5. 6. 7. villages at the foot of the mount of Olives, very near Jerusalem ; which city he intended now to enter. He sent two of his disciples therefore to one

1. See an account of the situation of these places in a note on Matt. xxiv, 3.

of the neighbouring towns, and describing in what circumstances they should find an ass's colt, he ordered them to bring it to him; telling them what they should say to the owner if any questions should be asked. Accordingly they brought it without difficulty; and throwing their garments over it, they set Jesus thereon. The multitude, in the mean time, shewing all the demonstrations of joy which were usual on the most solemn occasions; spreading flowers, and even their garments in the way, preceded, and followed him, crying, Hosannah to the son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosannah in the highest!— In this triumphant manner Jesus entered Jerusalem; and going into the temple examined every thing; and in the evening retired with his disciples to Bethany.

The next morning, as he returned to Jerusalem, he was hungry; and observing a fig-tree, he came up to

8. See a note on Matt. xxi. 8.

10. See the parallel passage in Matt. xxi. 9.

13. The deists find here great matter of ridicule. The text tells us, they say, *the time of figs was not yet*: how then could Jesus possibly expect fruit at a season when there *could* be none? But the words, *καιρος συκων* some think may signify, not the time when figs *were* ripe, but the time when they *were* gathered; which was not till the sheaf of the first-fruits had been waved before the Lord. (Levit. xxiii. 10.) The sense of the passage therefore they make to run thus: "And seeing a fig-tree he came to it, expecting to find fruit on it, as he well might, because the time of gathering fruit was not yet come."—Others, however, considering that this event fell out in the month Nisan, which was a quarter of a year at least before figs were commonly ripe, are not satisfied

to it, expecting fruit, but found only leaves. He made it therefore an example to his disciples of the unprofitableness of a dead faith.

15. On entering Jerusalem, he went immediately into the temple; and finding the courts of the Gentiles, where profelytes used to worship, full of people trading with their goods, under the pretence of furnishing necessaries for the temple-service, he drove them all out with authority, and would not suffer any burthens to be carried through the courts: quoting that passage of Isaiah; *The sons of the strangers that join themselves to the Lord will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer. For my house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.*
- 16.
- 17.
18. These things, it may easily be supposed, gave great offence to the chief priests: but they durst only plot in private against Jesus; being afraid of taking any public measures, lest they should alarm the people, who had a high veneration for him.

satisfied with this explication, but have recourse to another, which seems indeed a better. It appears from the Talmudists (see Lightfoot's Heb. and Talmud, Exercita. vol. i. p. 227.) that the Jews had different kinds of fig-trees, and among them some which held their leaves and fruit through the winter. St. Mark seems to allude to this kind of fig-tree, by saying *it had leaves* at a time when other fig-trees had not begun to shoot. As it had leaves therefore Jesus might have expected to have found fruit, though the time of figs was not yet. Pliny speaks of this sort of fig-tree. *Seri fructus per hiemem in arbore manent, et æstate inter novas frondes, et folia maturescunt.* Lib. xvi. c. 26. — See also on this subject Bowyer's Conject.

17. Isa. lvi. 7.

In

In the evening Jesus retired again to Bethany ; and 19.20.21.
the next morning returned, as before, with his dis-
ciples to Jerufalem, As they paffed the fig-tree, Peter
observed that it was withered to the roots : on which 22.
Jesus took occafion to impreff on them the neceffity
of a ftrong exertion of faith. There is no miracle, 23.
faid he, beyond its power to effect. If fteady faith ac- 24.
company your prayers, you may be affured of receiv-
ing what you pray for ; only ftill you will remember,
that a forgiving difpofition muft be united to your
prayers. Without that, nothing can carry them to
the throne of God.

By this time they had entered Jerufalem ; and Jesus 27. 28.
going into the temple, began again his cuftomary em-
ployment of teaching the people.

The chief priefts and fcribes in the mean time
had taken new courage ; and coming to Jesus, de-
manded by what authority he did thefe things ?
alluding particularly to the violence he had fhewn
the day before in the courts of the temple. —
Jesus knowing their malice, told them, that before 29. 30.
he answered their queftion he muft ask another.
Was John's miffion, faid he, of *divine* or of *human*

22. The barren fig-tree is fometimes confidered as an emblem
of the rejection of the Jews : but as it feems to have been held out
only to the *disciples*, I prefer the interpretation I have given.

23. This promife of our Saviour to his difciples, I apprehend,
relates chiefly to the enabling of them to perform miracles ; yet in
a degree it may be applicable to all Chriftians, as affording them
affiftance in the midft of difficulties and diftreffes, which may ap-
pear like removing mountains.

origin? — This *question* was in fact an *answer*; for whatever John's authority was, such also was
 31. 32. that of Jesus. — The chief priests easily saw the difficulty. *Human* they durst not call it; because every body believed John to be a prophet: and if they should say it was *divine*, the reply was obvious;
 33. Why then did you not believe him? They were obliged therefore to tell Jesus they could not resolve his question. Neither then, said Jesus, shall I resolve yours.

CHAP.
XII.

1. Jesus having thus silenced the chief priests, continued the subject, by setting before them, in the audience of the people, their hardened, impenitent, and dangerous state — the ungrateful returns which the Jewish nation had made to God for all his calls of mercy — and finally God's intention of casting them off, and adopting the Gentiles in their room. — A person, said he, planted a vineyard; and having furnished it with every thing necessary, left it in the
 2. 3. 4. 5. hands of labourers, and took a journey. At the proper season, he sent a servant to the labourers for the
 6. fruits of it. But they paid no regard to the message, and even ill-treated the messenger. Others sent on the same errand, they used with the same indignity, and even put some of them to death. At last the master of the vineyard sent his only son, not doubting that to him they would pay a proper

1. See a note on Matt. xxi. 33.

respect: but it happened otherwise. These wicked 7. 8.
labourers, lost to all sense of goodness, put even the
son himself to death; concluding, that now they
should divide the vineyard among themselves. What 9.
therefore, continued Jesus, shall the Lord of the
vineyard do to those wicked labourers? He will
come with power, and destroying them, give his
vineyard to others. Have you never read, said he, 10.
that the stone which the builders rejected is become the
head of the corner; and that this is the Lord's doing; 11.
and is marvellous in our eyes?* — To this strong re- 12.
proof the chief priests were unable to reply. They
perceived plainly that the parable was pointed at
them, and were stung with malice: but not daring
to shew it openly, through a fear of the people, they
retired a second time to plot in private.

Their next endeavour was to ensnare him, and 13.
draw matter of conviction from himself. With
this view they sent some of the Pharisees and He-
rodians to him; who pretending much reverence 14.
towards him, as if wishing to satisfy their consciences
by his decision, desired to have his opinion on the
great national question, Whether it were lawful to
pay tribute to Cæsar? The question was ensnaring,
because his answer, whether in the negative or
affirmative, must of course offend either the Ro-
mans or the Jews. — Jesus knowing their design, 15.
avoided the snare by desiring to see the tribute-

* Pl. cxviii. 22. 23.

16. money. Whose image, said he, and inscription does this coin bear? — They answered Cæsar's.
17. Give then to Cæsar, said he, the things that are Cæsar's; and unto God, the things that are God's. — The Pharisees and Herodians finding themselves totally unequal to his wisdom, retired with astonishment.
18. A body of Sadducees came to him next. They did not believe a future state; and brought a question to him, which on a supposition there was one, appeared to them of uncommon difficulty. — Master, 19. 20. 21. said they, Moses commanded, that if a man die 22. 23. 24. without children, his brother shall take his wife, and raise a family to preserve his brother's name. Now we have an instance of seven brethren who successively married the same woman: we should be glad therefore to know, if there be a resurrection, which of them shall hereafter be the woman's husband? —
25. In this question, replied Jesus, you shew your ignorance both of the *power of God*, and of the *truth of scripture*. For in the first place, the state of the next world is not accommodated to the condition of this: marriage, which is necessary here, will be unnecessary
26. there. — Then again, with regard to your main question, if you believe the scriptures you must also believe the resurrection of the dead. For in scripture God calls himself the God of Abraham, and the God
27. of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Do you not then

see the absurdity of supposing that God should style himself the God of persons who were not really in a state of existence?

This answer silenced the Sadducees. But one of the Scribes, who had heard what passed, and perceiving the propriety with which Jesus had answered them, asked him, Which was the principal part of the law? — Jesus referred him to the moral part — his duty to God and his neighbour; and placed the sum of religion in the observance and subordination of these great points. — To this the Scribe assented; declaring, that in his opinion, God respected the performance of those duties greatly beyond sacrifice, or any other religious ceremony. — Jesus, pleased with his answer, told him, he was not far

28.

29.30.31.

32. 33.

34 35.36.

37.

28. There seems to be a difference here between the accounts of St. Matthew and St. Mark. St. Matthew (xxii. 35.) says, the Scribe came (*παραζωον*) with an *insidious intention*, and evidently introduces him under this idea. *When the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. Then one of them, &c.* St. Mark's account has manifestly a different tendency. Some expositors, Dr. Clark in particular, reconcile the two accounts by supposing he came at first *παραζωον*; and afterwards became convinced. But this does not entirely reconcile them; for St. Mark says, the Scribe had been attending to the discourse of Jesus, and perceived that *he had answered well*. — Besides, I do not see how a question of this kind was calculated for any *insidious purpose*. — But perhaps the Scribe's behaviour (who probably acted with great caution) might have struck St. Matthew in one way; and the apostle, whoever he was, who instructed St. Mark, in another. The great point which was intended to be shewn, was the preference which Jesus gave to the moral law above the ceremonial: and to this point both the evangelists attended; paying little regard perhaps to other circumstances.

29. Our Saviour's answer to the Scribe is interpreted by Dr. Clark, as adverting to the difference between the *moral* and *ceremonial* law; which, I think, appears most agreeable to the context.

from

from having a just idea of those doctrines, and of that holy kingdom, which the gospel meant to establish.

While the Scribes still continued in the temple, Jesus asked them in what way they explained that passage of David, *The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool*. This you all acknowledge, said he, to be spoken of the Messiah; and yet you see David calls him *his Lord*. How then do you reconcile this with his being David's son? — To this no answer was given. And indeed from this time, none either of the chief priests, Scribes, or Pharisees, ever ventured to put a question to him again: while the common people seemed evidently to rejoice in the great superiority which he had acquired. — Jesus then turning to the people, dismissed them with a caution against the hypocrisy of the Scribes. They affect every thing, said he, that is grave, solemn, and sanctified; they claim to themselves superiority; and as an atonement for their oppressions, make long prayers. Their hypocrisy shall be a great addition to their guilt.

47. As Jesus, after these discourses, was leaving the temple, he observed the people throwing their offer-

41. There were chests placed in the courts of the temple, in which people put their voluntary contributions for furnishing bullocks, sheep, wood, salt, and other things necessary for sacrifices; and it was thought right for every body to give something, which was the reason why the poor widow gave, notwithstanding her great indigence.

ings

ings into the Treasury; and many, who were rich, giving largely. Among others, he observed a poor widow who came and threw in two mites, which together make only a farthing. Jesus thought this a proper opportunity to instruct his disciples in the nature of alms-giving. This poor widow, said he, hath thrown into the treasury a gift more acceptable to God, than any of those you have just seen offered: for God measures the charitable action, not by the largeness of the gift, but by the motive of the giver.

As they left the temple, one of the disciples, examining it with particular attention, desired his master to observe the size of the stones, and splendor of the whole building. — Jesus told him, that, vast and splendid as it was, in a little time, not one stone should be left upon another.

Nothing more was said on the subject at that time; but as they retired in the evening, and sat down on the side of the mount of Olives, in direct view of the temple, some of the disciples asked Jesus, When this great revolution, of which he spoke, should happen? and what signs should precede it? — One of the first signs, said he, shall be the appearance of impostors, under the title of prophets, and Messiahs, who shall make great pretences to deliver the Jews; and shall deceive many. *Thou I have warned against them.*

44. This sentiment, though not *expressed* in the text, is certainly *implied*. Our Saviour says, *she gave more*. More in *reality* she certainly did *not* give. It must therefore be *more* from some *accomplishment*.

1. Josephus speaks of the stones of which the temple was built, as of an amazing size. Some of them, he says, were sixty feet in length.

7. 8. You will next hear of commotions, wars, famines, and other distresses. These things will bring on apace the approaching destruction. — In the mean time, you must expect persecution. You must be brought, to answer for the truth, before the great men and kings of the earth. Thus you shall be the happy means of introducing the gospel among the Gentiles.
10. In these circumstances be not afraid; nor hesitate for answers. You shall be under the direction of an all-powerful assistance. Only be prepared for the worst in this world: for the religion you preach is so contrary to the views and passions and prejudices of men, that their malice and opposition to it will overpower every natural affection. — Keep the eye of faith, therefore, steadily fixed on the great end of all your labours and sufferings. — The last sign of this destruction shall be the approach of the Roman army, which the prophet Daniel calls the *abomination of desolation*; alluding to the heathen armies surrounding the holy temple of God. — When this sign comes on, be assured, the destruction I have predicted is at hand. Then let all who believe this prophecy escape from a guilty city: let them fly to God to remove all obstructions, and assist their flight; for among all the calamities that ever happened to mankind, or ever shall happen, nothing ever was or shall be greater than this. And unless God, in his regard for his chosen servants, shall shorten those days of distress,

the

19. Whoever reads the account which Josephus gives of the siege of Jerusalem, and the destruction of the temple, without the firmness within, and above all the rage and cruelty of contending factions in the midst of all this scene of horror, will be inclined to

the whole Jewish nation must inevitably perish. —
 In the midst of these calamities, impostors shall still
 arise, and persuade people to acts of sedition, through
 the hopes of deliverance. But I have forewarned
 you not to be seduced by any of these pretences. —
 Such are the signs which shall precede the destruction
 of Jerusalem. From this time the Jewish govern-
 ment shall totally cease; and the whole Jewish nation
 shall henceforwards become a standing proof of the
 establishment of the Messiah's kingdom. The mi-
 nisters of Christ shall be sent out to draw those into
 one fold, from every part of the world, who believe
 in the gospel. — As surely, therefore, as you know
 the approach of summer by the budding of the tree,
 so surely you may know the approach of these cala-
 mities by the signs I have given you. Even before
 the present generation end, this great event shall take
 place. Heaven and earth shall be dissolved, and pass
 away; but the truths which I have set before you,
 be assured, shall be completely fulfilled.

That great event, the destruction of Jerusalem,
 is a sign or type of that still greater event, the disso-
 lution

think these words of our Saviour, though in some degree hyperboli-
 cal, do not greatly exceed the misery they describe.

25. The heavenly bodies are usual figures in the Jewish lan-
 guage to describe earthly potentates. Isaiah is frequent in the use
 of them. Nay instances might be brought from the Talmud, in
 which these lofty figures are used to describe the ruin even of pri-
 vate families.

32. Our Saviour mixes together the two great ideas of the de-
 struction of the Jewish nation, and of the end of the world. The
 two ideas are very distinguishable; though the colours are so
 blended that the line of separation is not easily distinguished,
 either here or in St. Matthew; but here the relation is more con-
 cise, and therefore more difficult. It is not indeed expressed in
 the text that the destruction of Jerusalem was a type of the con-

- lution of heaven and earth, and the final consummation of all things. — The time, indeed, of *this* latter event God only knows; but your ignorance of the time should be a great argument for constant preparation. I am about to leave you. As a master, taking a journey, leaves his house and goods under the care of his servants, whom he exhorts to be circumspect and attentive; so I exhort you to be those faithful servants, that, at whatever time your master call, at an early hour, or at a late one, you may be well prepared to receive him. — Nor is this great preparation a doctrine intended for your use alone; but must be strongly inculcated on all who desire to be my disciples.

CHAP.
XIV.

1. 2. While Jesus held these divine discourses with his disciples, the chief priests and Scribes had been consulting how to destroy him: but as he was so much revered by the people, they had laid aside all thoughts of seizing him at the passover, when such multitudes were assembled.

3. From the open part of the mount of Olives, where Jesus had been sitting with his disciples, he retired, as usual, to Bethany; where, at the house of one Simon,

summation of all things: but this seems to be the idea. — *Not the son but the father* — that is, the son as the Messiah, declaring the will of God, knew it not; or, as Dr. Clark expounds it, *it was among those truths which he was not commissioned to declare.* This is agreeable to what our Saviour says on other occasions: *My doctrine is not mine, but his who sent me.* John vii. 16. — See likewise John xii. 49. — xiv. 10. — v. 20.

33. Here another idea, that of death, is introduced; which is to each individual the same as the general consummation of all things.

3. *Συρρίλασα, she brake the box.* This should not be applied to the box, but to *shaking* or *breaking* the ointment; which separates

mon, whom he had formerly cured of a leprosy, the following circumstance happened. As he sat at meat, a woman brought a box of very precious ointment; which, in great respect, she poured upon his head. Some at the table, taking offence at this, as a waste of what might have been sold for a considerable sum, and given to the poor, found fault with the woman. But Jesus answered, Censure her not; her zeal is highly praise-worthy. The poor you have always with you, as the objects of your charity. This is an extraordinary occasion. She hath shewn her regard for me by anointing my body for its burial; and wherever the gospel shall be preached, this act, unworthy as you may esteem it, shall be recorded to her praise.

It was at this time that Judas first meditated the design of betraying his master. With this purpose he went to the chief priests, and offered, for a proper reward, to conduct their officers where they might seize him with the greatest privacy. — The offer was received with joy. An agreement was

rates the parts, and diffuses the fragrance more strongly.

————— *Fracta magis redolere videntur*

Omnia, quod contrita —————

Anointing with perfumes was common at the feasts of the ancients.

Ciboria explè: funde capâcibus

Unguenta de conchiis —————

HOR. CAR. II. 7.

It was common also to use boxes made of alabaster, as well as shells. *Hunc aliqui lapidem alabastrum vocant, quem cavant ad vasa unguentaria, quoniam optivè servare incorrupta dicitur.*

Plin. de Marmor.

10. See a note on Matt. xxvi. 14.

made; and thirty pieces of silver were given; for which Judas engaged to bring them the earliest intelligence of Jesus's retirement.

13. 14. 15.

15. 16.

In the meantime the passover approached; and Jesus having yet taken no notice of it, the disciples mentioned it to him: on which he ordered two of them to go into the city, where they should find a man, in such circumstances as he described, entering a house. This person they were instructed to follow, and to ask for a chamber where they might eat the passover. All this was done; and an upper room, well furnished, was shewn them, where proper preparation was made.

17. 18.

Jesus, soon after, came with the twelve; and as they sat at meat, he told them plainly, that one of them should betray him. This threw the whole table into a great anxiety; each being solicitous to know whom he meant. — It is one, said Jesus, who now eateth with me. That the son of man should die, as the prophets have foretold, is necessary for the salvation of the world; but that is no excuse for him by whom the son of man is betrayed. Wretched is the state of that guilty person.

20. 21.

22.

After supper, Jesus took bread, and giving thanks, brake it, and gave it among his disciples, saying, Eat this, in a solemn manner, in remembrance of

16. See a note on Matt. xxvi. 19.

21. See a note on Matt. xxvi. 25.

my body, which is given for you. Then taking the cup, he presented it also to them, saying, Drink this likewise, in remembrance of my blood, which is shed for you. From henceforward, let the pass-over cease; and let this ceremony be established in its room among all Christians. — After the celebration of this rite, they sang a hymn; and Jesus retired with them, as usual, towards the mount of Olives.

That severe time of trial, (said he to them, as they walked,) of which I have so often warned you, is now at hand — that time, of which the prophet speaks, *I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.* — Be not, however, discouraged: after I am risen from the dead, I will meet you again in Galilee. — Peter, with great vehemence, answered his master, by declaring, that whoever should be offended, he certainly never should. Jesus checked his presumption by telling him, that before the cock should crow twice, he should, that very night, deny him thrice. Peter, with still greater confidence, replied, he might die with him; but to deny him was impossible; in which language they all united.

By this time they were come to a part of the mount of Olives, called Gethsemane, from the oil-presses which stood there. — Here Jesus, leaving all his disciples, except Peter, James, and John, went

25. See a note on Matt. xxvi. 29.

26. See a note on Matt. xxvi. 30.

27. See Zech. xiii. 7.

with these three a little farther, and fell into an agony. My soul, said he, is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death: wait here awhile, and watch with me. — He then went forward a few paces, and falling on the ground, he prayed, that if it were possible, that hour might pass from him. All things, O my father, said he, are possible with thee — take this cup from me — Nevertheless not my will, but thine be done. — Then returning to his disciples, and finding them heavy with sleep, he rebuked them for their great unconcern in an hour of such distress. Watch, said he, and pray for God's assistance in this time of trial. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak. — Having said this, he went a second time, and prayed in the same earnest manner. When he came back, he found them again heavy and confused. — Returning a third time he told them, — his agony was now past — and other trials should immediately come on. Arise, said he; the great event is at hand.

43.44.45. He had scarce spoken, when a number of armed men appeared with Judas at their head, who went up to Jesus and saluted him. The officers and servants of the chief priests immediately seized him. 46. 47. — This violence at first raised the opposition of the disciples, and one of them drawing a sword, 48. wounded a servant of the high-priest. Jesus in the mean time expostulated with them for this secret and insidious manner of taking him; telling them, 49. they had frequent opportunities of seizing him openly in the temple, if they had any legal charge against

against him. — But the scriptures, added he, must be fulfilled. — The disciples now seeing all was over, provided for their own safety by flight. One young man among them the servants seized, but he leaving his garment in their hands escaped.

From the mount of Olives Jesus was immediately carried before the high-priest; with whom were assembled, though it was now late, the principal of the Jewish Sanhedrim. — Among the crowd of officers and servants, Peter, who had followed at a distance, now mixed himself; and entering the palace, sat down with others at the fire.

The chief priests, who were determined at any rate to put Jesus to death, wished however to have as much as possible the appearance of justice on their side; and with this view they had prepared what evidence they could: but every deposition was so slight and trifling, that it was impossible to found a charge on any thing that was deposed. Among other accusations, it was attested, that he had been heard to say, *I will destroy this temple made with hands, and within three days I will build another without hands.* But neither did this appear of weight sufficient for their purpose,

52. The sense need not require that he fled from them literally naked, but only without his upper garment.

54. It was then near midnight, which might be cold at that season, though the day might be warm. This all travellers tell us is common in those countries.

56. *Ισως ου παντρωπις εν ηρας*: *The depositions were not equal* — that is, either to a sentence of death, or perhaps, because they were contradictory.

60. The high-priest then rising up, asked Jesus, What
 61. he had to say in his own defence? But as he had
 been charged with nothing, he answered nothing.
 Among other questions, the high-priest asked
 62. him, Whether he was the Christ? To this Jesus
 thought proper to answer in the affirmative; and
 referred him to a grand event, the destruction of
 Jerusalem, speedily coming on, for a confirmation
 63. 64. of his pretensions. This was all that was desired.
 The high-priest in great emotion cried out, What
 need we farther witnesses? you have heard the blas-
 phemy. On this the whole council resolved they
 65. had now sufficient evidence to reach his life. The
 assembly then rose, and for the present left him
 in the hands of the servants, who seemed to vie with
 each other in shewing him every instance of indignity
 and offensive behaviour.
66. 67. In the mean time Peter continuing in the hall, was
 accosted by a servant-maid, as a person that be-
 68. longed to Jesus. But in great agitation he denied
 that he had any knowledge of him. He left the hall,
 however, and went out into the porch, where he
 69. heard the cock crow. It happened, while he was
 there, another maid seeing him, repeated the former
 observation; which Peter denied a second time.
 70. Soon after some people coming up, affirmed there

62. Though Jesus's referring the high-priest to such an event could have no effect at *that time*, yet it furnished a strong and perhaps a *recorded* argument afterwards. It then became prophecy.

could

could be no doubt about the matter; for his very speech betrayed him to be a Galilean. — On this Peter, with vehement imprecations declared, that he was not even acquainted with Jesus. Soon after, he heard the cock crow a second time, which brought the words of Jesus full into his memory. In an agony of distress he ran out, and gave vent in private to the bitterest tears of self-conviction and remorse.

71.

72.

Thus far the chief priests had been endeavouring only to procure evidence against Jesus; for they had no power, under the Romans, to put a criminal to death. They had concerted the matter however so as to carry him, though at that early hour, (for it now drew towards morning,) before Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, who was on all occasions ready to oblige them. But as they did not think that Jesus's confessing himself to be *the Messiah* would have much weight with a heathen magistrate, they changed the word *Messiah* into *the king of the Jews*; which, though an equivalent expression in the language of their prophets, was yet greatly more offensive to the Romans. Pilate accordingly asked him,

CHAP.

XV.

1.

2.

72. The word *ἐξέβη* cannot signify, *when he thought thereon*. Some render it as *here, running or throwing himself out*; and others, *covering his head with a mantle*. — None of the evangelists hath related so circumstantially as St. Mark, the denial of St. Peter, which hath always been considered as a singular argument of the simplicity, truth, and openness of St. Peter's character. As St. Mark is allowed, on all hands, to have written from St. Peter, it is probable that through the means of that apostle he was so particularly circumstantial in the detail of this event.

whether

whether he really professed any claim of this kind? To this Jesus answered, that he certainly did not in that temporal sense in which he had been accused.

3. 4. 5. — In the mean time the chief priests laid many and grievous accusations to his charge: but he answered nothing, which Pilate took notice of with surprise.

6. 7. 8. 9. That magistrate, however, conceiving that the
10. 11. matter was of very frivolous import, determined on an expedient to release him. — It was an annual custom, at the passover, for the Roman governor to release a prisoner at the option of the people: and as there happened to be at that time a very notorious offender, one Barrabbas, in custody, Pilate supposed, that as the difference between Jesus and him was so very striking, the people could not hesitate about the matter. It happened however otherwise; for as Pilate plainly shewed an inclination to save Jesus, they clamoured the louder, desiring that they might have their privilege of option; and requested that Barrabbas might be the favoured person. — Pilate again demanding in a sort of derision, with a view to raise compassion, what he
12. should then do with the king of the Jews? they
13. all cried out, demanding that he might be crucified.

11. This cannot well be supposed of *the people in general*, at that early hour, before they could be collected; but rather of the servants and retainers of the temple, who, no doubt, amounted to a large body. And even those were wrought on by the chief priests, as it appears, to favour their design. See a note on Matt. xxvii. 39. See also Matt. xv. 11.

— Pilate

— Pilate, a third time interfering, informed them, that nothing worthy of death had been laid to his charge. But it availed nothing: the clamour rose higher, and they all with one voice demanded that he might be crucified. — Pilate, therefore, unwilling to disoblige the high-priest and his party, released Barrabbas, and condemned Jesus to be scourged and crucified.

Jesus was then delivered to the soldiers for execution, who had the same liberty allowed them of exercising their wanton cruelty upon him, which had been allowed before to the servants of the high-priest. They immediately called the whole cohort together into the guard-room; where, clothing Jesus in a purple robe, and putting a mock-crown on his head, and a reed for a sceptre in his hand, they first retired a few paces, and saluting him, cried, Hail, king of the Jews. Then taking the reed out of his hand, they struck him on the head, and spit upon him. — Then retiring again, as if they had been guilty of some high offence, they worshipped him as a God. — After they had thus sated their brutal malice, they took off the purple robe, and replacing his own garments, led him to death;

15. See a note on Matt. xxvii. 26.

17. See Matt. xxvii. 29.

18. See a note on Matt. xxvii. 29.

21. He is said to be the father of Alexander and Rufus. These persons were probably well known at that time. — These little indirect appeals to persons (which are frequent in the New Testament) are commonly thought, and with justice, to be an argument in favour of the truth of these simple narratives.

21. See a note on Matt. xxvii. 32.

obliging

obliging one Simon, a Cyrenian, whom they accidentally met, and probably supposed to be his disciple, to assist him in bearing his cross. Having brought him to a mount, called Golgotha, which signifies the place of a skull; they offered him in derision, after his fatigue, an embittered draught, which he refused.

22. 23. 24.
25. 26.

It was yet only nine o'clock in the morning; so expeditiously had the chief priests hurried over the affair, since his apprehension on the preceding evening. The soldiers then nailed him to the cross, and placing over his head an inscription, *The king of the Jews*, sat down to part his garments among them.

27. 28. Two malefactors also were crucified with him, one on each hand; so completely was the prophecy of Isaiah fulfilled, which describes the Messiah *as being*

29. *numbered with transgressors.* — What had been alleged against him at his trial, was now retorted with great scorn: *Thou, that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself, and come down*

30. *from the cross.* — The chief priests also and Scribes joined their revilings with those of the people: *He saved others, they cried, let him now save himself: let Christ, the king of Israel, descend from the cross, and we will believe.*

31. 32.

33. About twelve o'clock a sudden darkness overspread the sun, and threw an awful gloom upon the whole transaction. — At three, Jesus, who had now hung six hours on the cross in patient suffering,

34.

28. See Isaiah lili. 12.

34. See a note on Matt. xxvii. 46.

being in the agony of death, cried out, *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani*: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" They, who stood by, mistook the expression; and while one ran to reach a sponge full of vinegar, at the end of a reed, to his mouth, another said, "Let him alone; let us see whether Elijah will come to save him." — Jesus crying out again in the same impassioned manner, expired: when instantly the veil of the temple, which separated the Holy of Holies, was rent asunder; indicating plainly, that all distinction between Jew and Gentile was now abolished. — Among other testimonies of the awful grandeur of this great event, that of the Roman centurion, who attended the execution, should not be omitted. This officer, seeing the many solemn and supernatural circumstances which accompanied the death of Jesus, could not help crying out, Certainly this person was the offspring of some God!

A few of Jesus's disciples, and of those who were attached to him, were present at this mournful scene. Some pious women also, who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance. — But among those who thought themselves most concerned in this solemn occasion, was Joseph of Arimathea, a man of fortune and consequence, and greatly attached to Jesus. This pious person, as evening drew on, and as the next day was the sabbath, when nothing could be done, went boldly to Pilate, and

39. See a note on the parallel passage of St. Matthew.

44. 45. begged the body of Jesus. — Pilate scarce conceiving that he could be dead, made himself sure of that point from the centurion, who attended the execution, and then granted the request. — Joseph taking the body from the cross, wrapped it in fine linen, and deposited it in a new tomb which he had hewn in a rock; fixing, at the same time, a large stone before the mouth of the sepulchre, to which it had been fitted.

- CHAP. The day after the sabbath, very early in the
 XVI. morning, Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of
 1. 2. James, and Salome, brought spices to embalm the
 3. 4. body. In the way, they consulted how they should
 remove the stone which closed the sepulchre. But
 5. on coming to the place, they found, to their great
 astonishment, that it was removed. They then
 entered the sepulchre, and to their still greater
 astonishment, saw an angel sitting in splendid array.
 6. As they retreated through fear, the angel thus ac-
 costed them: Be not afraid. I know your errand:
 you seek your crucified Saviour. He is not here.
 He is risen from the dead. See the place where his
 7. body lay. — And now go, tell his disciples to
 meet him in Galilee, as he formerly ordered them.
 8. — On this the women, leaving the sepulchre in
 great confusion and agitation of passions, were met.

— 7. In the text it is, *tell his disciples, and Peter*. The particular mention of that apostle was probably to shew him, that notwithstanding his denial of Christ, his repentance had restored him.

by Jesus, who first discovered himself to Mary 9.
 Magdalen. She immediately ran to his disciples, 10 11.
 whom she found in sorrow and great dejection, and
 endeavoured to animate them with the joyful news of
 Jesus's resurrection. But they gave little credit to
 her story.

After that, Jesus appeared to two of the disciples 12. 13.
 themselves, as they walked into the country. They
 likewise informed the rest of their brethren, but were
 equally discredited.

Soon afterwards he appeared again to all the 14.
 eleven disciples assembled together, and gently chid
 their unbelief in a matter of which he had so often
 spoken to them, and which had been so well at-
 tested by eye-witnesses. — He then gave them his 15.
 last instructions. Go, said he, and preach the gos-
 pel, from henceforth, to all the world. They, 16.
 who believe its doctrines, and obey its rules, shall be
 saved: but they, who reject its evidences, must
 take on themselves the consequence. And that you 17. 18.
 may be the better enabled to preach the gospel, you
 shall be endued with the power of working mi-
 racles.

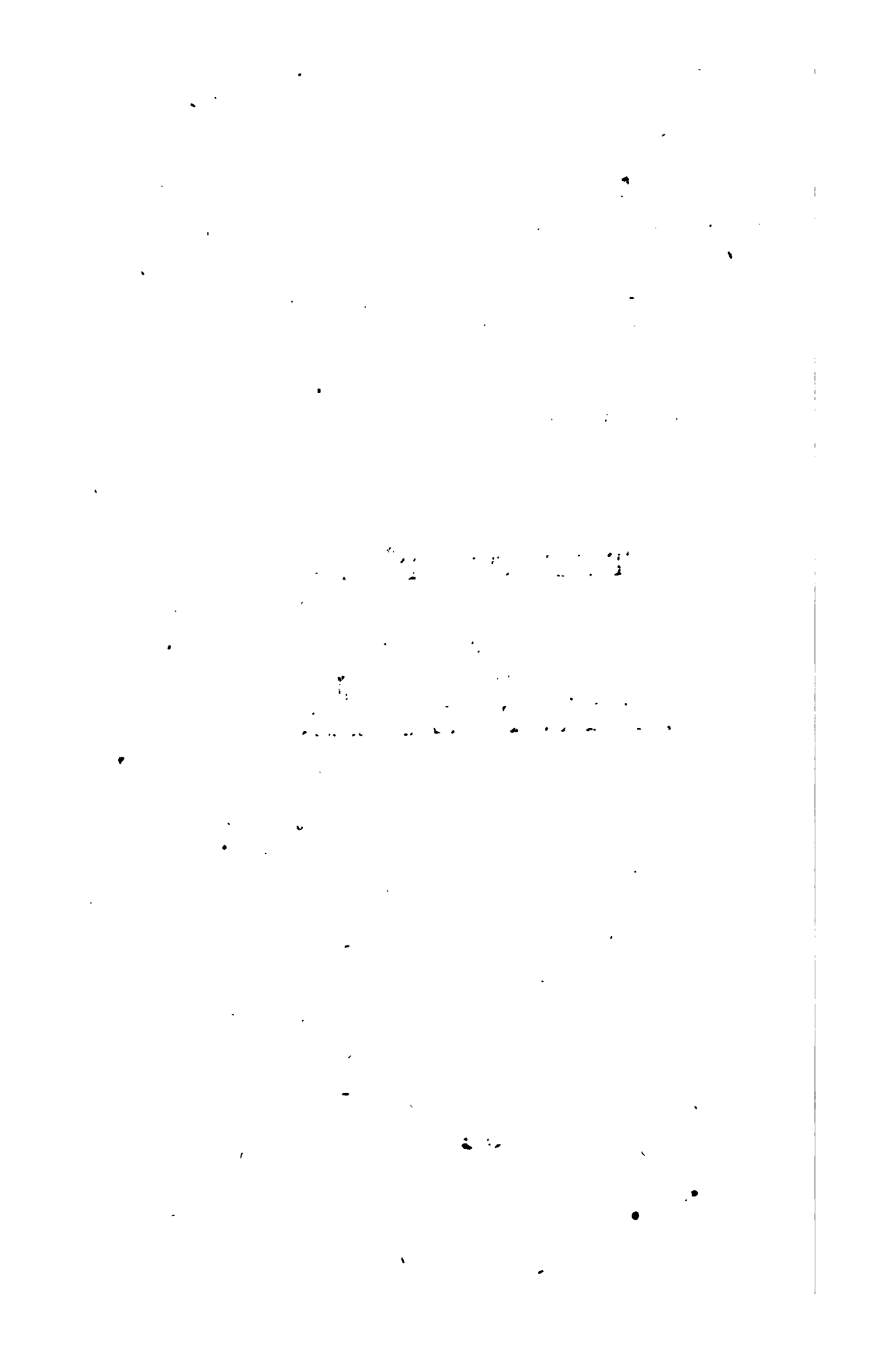
18. *If they drink any deadly thing, &c.* Why should they drink
any deadly thing? Not as a miracle, one should suppose. Perhaps,
 as poisoning was at this time carried to a great height, and often
 used in executing criminals, the apostles might be exposed to it by
 their secret enemies.

19. After Jesus had given them these instructions, he
 20. ascended into heaven : and they, obedient to his word, went out, and every where preached the gospel, and confirmed the truth of it by miracles.

19. It seems to have been necessary for the apostles to have been witnesses of our Saviour's ascension. To see him *alive* after his death, was evidence sufficient of his resurrection. Dr. Lardner, in apology for St. Matthew and St. John, who have omitted mentioning the ascension, says, its truth is included in the resurrection : and, no doubt to the believer, it may be ; but not to the gainsayer, who might deny the fact, and say, that Christ had only secreted himself. It appears to me, therefore, that if none of the evangelists had borne testimony to the ascension of Christ, it would have been a great desideratum in the sacred history ; and I was rather surprised at finding so judicious a critic as Dr. Lardner laying so little stress on the mention of this circumstance. See his letter to Mr. La Roche, in the Appendix of his Life by Dr. Kippis. Mr. Paley, in his excellent book on the Evidences of Christianity, accounts for the omission in the two evangelists, by supposing they considered it as a fact of such notoriety, that they thought the mention of it unnecessary. St. John alludes to it often (vi. 62.—iii. 13.—xvi. 28.—xx. 17.). See Paley's Evid. vol. i. p. 162.

END OF THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO
 ST. MARK.

THE GOSPEL
OF
SAINT LUKE.



P R E F A C E

TO

ST. LUKE'S GOSPEL.

AFTER St. Matthew's gospel, which gives us the clearest and fullest account of the life and doctrine of our blessed Saviour, we have St. Mark's; which adds a few circumstances to the sacred story; but is chiefly valuable as a confirmation of St. Matthew.

The next in order is St. Luke. This evangelist is supposed to be the same person who, under similar names, is mentioned in the Acts, and in several of St. Paul's epistles, in one of which he is styled a physician*. Though his name has rather a Gentile than a Jewish sound, yet he is generally supposed to have been a Jew, at least a Jewish believer. As to a common opinion of his having been a painter, there seems not to be the least foundation for it in antiquity.

From the pen of this evangelist we have a rich accession to the sacred story. The history of the birth of John the Baptist—several particulars relating to the birth of our Saviour—the parable of the good Samaritan—of the prodigal son—of Dives and Lazarus—of the wicked judge—of the

* Acts xiii. 1. Rom. xvi. 21. Col. iv. 14. 2 Tim. iv. 11. Philem. 24.

Pharisee and the publican — the account of the ten lepers — of Zaccheus — of the penitent thief — of the journey to Emmaus — and many other particulars of less moment, are all recorded solely by St. Luke. He had his intelligence, as he himself tells us, from different witnesses; and had before him therefore a large field of information.

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ST. LUKE.

AS many have written accounts of the life and death of Jesus Christ, on which the Christian builds his faith; I thought it right, my respected Theophilus, to draw up my account also of these things. I have had so perfect an information on this subject, from eye-witnesses, that I am enabled to

CHAP.

I.

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3. It is not well decided, whether *Theophilus* is a real person or a feigned one. The title of *excellent* implies the former: the *name*, which may suit any religious person, implies the latter.

3. St. Luke tells us, he wrote *from the information of others*; and seems to restrain the meaning of the word *αὐτοῖς* to the sense given in our translation.—See more on this point in the general preface.

4. St. Luke speaks here of several gospels which had been written in his days; and though the *particulars* of what he says rather incline us to think favourably of those gospels, yet his *general sense* gives us an unfavourable idea of them. For if so many gospels, in those days, had been written *faithfully*, what occasion was there for St. Luke to write another? None of the ancients, nor any good interpreters, suppose he means St. Matthew's gospel or St. Mark's; neither of which, it is probable was written at that time: or if they were, it is very improbable that he had seen them. — The evangelist says, he writes *in order*; from which some harmonizers, particularly Le Clerk, have taken it for granted, that he is more exact in point of time than any of the evangelists; and have reduced the chronology of all the gospels to the chronology of St. Luke. But other critics are of a different opinion; and conceive, that St. Luke had no intention to testify his *particular exactness in point of time* but

to assure you and all other Christians, of the truth of that religion, in which you have been instructed.

5. 6. In the days of Herod, king of Judea, lived a priest, called Zacharias, who, with his wife Elizabeth, were eminent examples of piety. They were both far advanced in years, and had no children.

7. As this holy priest, according to the order of his
8. 9. course, was offering incense in the sanctuary, while
10. the people were praying without, an angel appeared
11. to him, standing on the right side of the altar.
12. Zacharias, expressing his surprise at the vision, was
13. told by the angel, that his prayers were heard—that God, in his own time, would grant him a son—that

but only that *he would relate events in the order in which he had received them.* In general, it is supposed, that in strict chronology he is even the least exact of any of the evangelists. He tells us, that he mentions such facts as were delivered to him by those who, *from the beginning, were eye witnesses.* As he himself therefore was *not an eye-witness* of the things he records, but had his accounts from different people, we may suppose, he could not be so exact in combining facts as St. Matthew, who had been an eye-witness of them himself. Grotius indeed says, that in omni hac historia, Lucam ad rerum, magis, quam ad temporum ordinem attendere: (see his note on cap. iv. 21.) by which, I suppose, he means, that St. Luke puts facts together in such a way as to make them illustrate each other.

8. See an account of the several orders of priests, 1 Chron. xxiv. 10.

10. There is something beautiful and poetical in that part of the Jewish ceremonial, which supposes the prayers of devout worshippers to be wafted to heaven in odouriferous wreaths of incense. David adopts the idea; *my prayer is set forth as the incense*, Ps. cxli. 2.

13. It is well known how much the Jews always wished for offspring, in hopes of giving birth to the Messiah.

the

the name of the child should be John—that he should
 be the source of great joy to all nations—that he
 should live with the austerity of a Nazarite, and act
 under the influence of the holy spirit of God—that
 he should call the children of Israel to repentance
 —and, in the power of Elijah, should prepare the
 world for the reception of the Messiah.

Zacharias, recovering from his surprize, was at
 first struck with the improbability of the thing, on
 account of the very advanced age both of himself
 and of his wife; and asked the angel, by what sign
 he should know the truth of this gracious message?
 — The angel told him, that his name was Gabriel;
 and that the very appearance of such a heavenly
 messenger was sign sufficient: but that, as he wanted
 a farther sign, he should have one, which should also

14. A name which signifies the *mercy of God*; or (as Bishop Pearce thinks) *joy and gladness*.

17. *To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children.* This is a difficult passage. Bishop Pearce, and other commentators, consider Christ as the *child* to whom the fathers should be turned, which I think rather a forced interpretation. The fact is, the words of Malachi (iv. 6.) are not quoted here, but only alluded to. In Malachi the sense is fuller: *He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children; and the heart of the children to their fathers;* which, in my opinion, means only to express that general philanthropy which the Christian religion was intended to introduce; and which the prophet Isaiah characterizes by those expressive images of the *lion and the lamb lying down together.* &c. — I think it remarkable, though I never saw it remarked, that the bible should conclude, as it does in this passage of Malachi, with such a noble prophecy of the advent of the Messiah. *Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: and he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children; and the heart of the children to their fathers; lest I come and smite the earth with a curse:* that is, lest I execute the great curse of which you read in the beginning of Genesis.

be

be the punishment of his unbelief. You shall be dumb, said the angel, till this event be fulfilled.

21. During this interview, a much longer time had elapsed, than seemed necessary for Zacharias's stay in the sanctuary; at which the people were not a little surpris'd. But when he came out of the temple, they soon found he had seen a vision, from those dumb actions by which he endeavoured to explain his meaning.

23. Notwithstanding this visitation, Zacharias continued to perform the functions of his office at Jerusalem, till the time of his administration was ended.

24. 25. He then retired to his house in the country with his wife; who, sequestering herself from the world, spent her time in praising God for his wonderful mercies to her.

26. 27. About six months after this event, the angel Gabriel was sent to Nazareth, a city of Galilee, to a virgin of the name of Mary, who was espoused to Joseph, a person of low station, though immediately descended from the house of David. To this holy virgin the angel appearing, pronounced her blessed among women; and soon eased her apprehension on so wonderful an interview, by telling her, that she was highly favoured in the sight of God, who had appointed her to be the instrument, in a miraculous manner, of bringing the Messiah into the world.

—The angel then, as a confirmation of the truth of this great event, informed her of the miraculous circumstances, in which her cousin Elizabeth was then

28. 29. 30.
31 32 33.
34 35.

then rejoicing; adding, that events, which men call miraculous, were as easy to God as the most ordinary effects of his power. — Mary, with great humility, received this divine salutation; praying, that God would make her worthy of the favours he had bestowed. 38.

After this wonderful information, her first care was to impart the circumstances of it to her cousin Elizabeth, who was so greatly concerned in them. Accordingly she took a journey to the mountainous country, where Zacharias dwelt. — On their first interview, it pleased God to give all these holy persons, in a singular manner, a new conviction of the truth of his promises. Mary had no sooner saluted Elizabeth, and told her errand, than the child, with which Elizabeth was now pregnant, seemed to leap for joy. On this, as if the whole truth had burst upon that holy woman at once, she cried out, in the spirit of God: — “Blessed art thou among women; and blessed the holy child thou hast conceived. With what humble thankfulness should I receive this visit from the mother of the Messiah! Even the very babe within me leapt for joy. Blessed 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45.

39. I should rather suppose this to have been her errand, than to prove the truth of the angel's veracity.

39. If Zacharias dwelt at Hebron, as is supposed, the length of the journey was about one hundred and twenty miles. See Well's Geography.

art thou, who hast believed these glad tidings; for every thing that the Lord hath spoken shall come to pass."

46. 47. Mary also, seized with the same divine enthusiasm,
48. thus uttered her joy:—"Praised, praised be the
Lord for all his goodness! My humble state prevents not his making me the instrument of happiness to all generations. It is the Almighty who hath done
49. this. To him alone our praise is due. His mercy
50. 51. 52. rests on them that fear him, however humble their
53. stations are; while pride, however exalted, shall be
54. 55. brought low.——Thus hath he treated his holy people; and thus, in remembrance of his promise to Abraham, will he ever treat them."

56 57. After the departure of Mary, who prolonged her visit about three months, Elizabeth was delivered
58. of a son; and all her relations came to rejoice with
59. her on so wonderful a birth.——On the eighth day the child was circumcised, and named Zacharias
60. 61. 62. after his father. But Elizabeth opposing it, they
63. applied to Zacharias himself; who, calling for a writing-table, wrote on it, that his name should be John: at which they, ignorant of the reason, were greatly surprised.

64. Soon after, the happiness of this pious family was completed by the restoration of Zacharias to the use of his speech; which he immediately employed in blessing and praising God.

In the mean time, the fame of these wonderful
 events was spread through the whole country, and,
 struck all who heard them with fear and reverence.
 Every one concluded that a child thus born must
 be intended to fulfil some wonderful purpose of
 God.—— In the foresight of this, Zacharias com-
 posed the following hymn. “ Blessed be the God
 of Israel, who hath at length visited his people,
 and raised up that salvation in the house of David,
 which all his holy prophets, from the beginning of
 time, have foretold. The covenant which he made
 with our fathers, the oath which he swore unto
 Abraham, are now completed in our deliverance
 from our spiritual enemies; that we may serve God
 without fear, in righteousness and holiness of life.
 And thou, child, art destined by God to be the fore-
 runner of this great event — to prepare the way for
 that mighty Saviour, who, through the mercy and
 free grace of God, will give salvation to his people
 by the remission of their sins — will guide them into
 the path of eternal peace — and extend this mercy to
 all who yet sit in darkness, and in the shadow of
 death.” —— Such was the holy joy and religious
 thankfulness which ran through every branch of this
 pious family.

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71. 72. 73.

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79. It is evident from this whole hymn, but especially from the conclusion of it, that Zacharias was not misled, as his countrymen commonly were, by the notion of a worldly deliverance, but had a perfect idea of the nature of the Messiah's kingdom.

In the mean time, as the child advanced in years, he advanced also in the favour of God : and when he came to the use of his own judgment, he retired into the wilderness, where he led a severe life of abstinence, meditation, and prayer, till the time appointed arrived, when he was to take upon him his public ministry.

- CHAP. II. About the time of John's birth, Augustus Cæsar
 1. 2. had ordered the country of Judea to be inrolled by
 3. Quirinius. In consequence of this order, every one
 4. 5. went to his family-town to be registered among his
 ancestors. And Bethlehem being the family-town
 of

1. The word *ἀνεγμὴν* often means only Judea. — This inrolling was a preamble to a general tax, which Augustus seems to have kept hanging over the head of Herod, with whom he was much displeased. Herod, by embassies and evasions, got the tax put off from time to time, but the inrolment went on.

2. Few passages in the New Testament have given more employment to the critical abilities of learned men, than the inrolment here mentioned by Quirinius. It seems to contradict, in point of time, the evidence of profane historians, particularly of Josephus. Dr. Lardner, in the first vol. of his *Credibility*, hath employed many more pages to settle this point, than St. Luke's whole gospel contains. He examines with great erudition and patience the opinion of learned men on the subject ; and settles it, that there were two inrolments made by Quirinius ; and translates the second verse thus : *This was the first inrolment made by Quirinius, governor of Syria.*

4. There is a difficulty, which hath already been mentioned, in the two genealogies, given us by St. Matthew and St. Luke, both of which appear to belong to Joseph. — This verse furnishes one solution of the difficulty, and not a bad one. If Mary had been considered only as Joseph's wife, she had no occasion to go to Bethlehem. *His* going would have been sufficient ; and we can hardly suppose, that in the situation in which she then was, he

of Joseph and Mary, who was now far advanced in her pregnancy, they were both, at this time, under the necessity of taking a journey thither. — Thus, through Cæsar's order for the enrolment of Judea, was brought about the birth of Christ at Bethlehem, according to the prophecy of Micah ; for here the holy virgin was delivered. As Bethlehem was necessarily at that time crowded, the conveniences, of course, were small. The guest-chamber in the house, where Joseph and she lodged, being engaged, they were obliged to take what accommodations they could have in an out-house, where cattle were commonly kept. Here Jesus Christ was born, and laid in a manger.

6.

7.

The first publication of this great event was in the same style of simplicity. — As a company of shepherds, near Bethlehem, were watching their flocks by night, a sudden illumination spread round them ;

8. 9.

he would have taken her. From *her* going therefore we are led to suppose, that *she* was under the necessity of going likewise. This would have been the case if her father had been dead without male issue. She would then have been the representative of her family. — In that case also, she must, by the Jewish law, have married a kinsman. Joseph's family and hers therefore would be the same ; and one pedigree would include both. This seems very plausible ; but there are some who suppose this enrolment was made according to the Roman customs, by which women, as well as men, were enrolled.

6. Chap. v. 2.

7. The word *καταλυμα*, which is here translated *an inn*, is in Luke xxii. 11. and in Mark xiv. 14. translated *a guest chamber*, and an *upper-room* ; either of which is a better word here.

9. This illumination was the *Shechinah*, or divine light, which the Jews always understood to be *the sign of God's authority* ; whether they heard a voice alone, or saw a form. This idea was very familiar in the early parts of the Jewish history.

VOL. I.

P

in

in the midst of which an angelic form appeared, and instantly dispelled their fears by accents of joy.

10. ———“ Fear not, (said he,) I bring glad tidings, not
 11. only to you, but to all people. This day is born in
 the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the
 12. Lord. As a sign, you shall find the holy babe
 wrapped in swaddling cloaths, and lying in a man-
 13. ger.” — As the angel spoke, the splendid light
 which incompassed the place, appeared suddenly
 14. thus joined in a song of praise : ———“ Glory be to
 God in the highest ; and on earth peace, and good
 will to man.”

- 15.16.17. As soon as this glorious vision disappeared, the
 18.19.20. shepherds, in obedience to it, went immediately to
 Bethlehem, where they found every thing as the
 angel had described. Then returning with joy, they
 related publicly all the wonderful circumstances they
 had seen. — From all these things people in general
 expected some great event to follow, though they
 knew not what : but Mary laid them all up with holy
 faith, in her heart ; and saw more and more the gra-
 cious promises of God taking effect.

21. • On the eighth day the child was circumcised, and
 called Jesus, according to the directions which the
 22.23.24. angel had left with Mary : and soon after, on the oc-
 casion of her purification, he was carried to Jerusalem,
 to be presented, as a first born, to the Lord, when
 the proper legal sacrifice was offered.

There dwelt at that time in Jerusalem, a man 25.
 of very eminent piety, whose name was Simeon.
 This devout person having long waited with holy 26.
 faith to see the completion of the promises of God,
 had a revelation from heaven, that he should not die
 till he had seen the Messiah; and being directed by 27.
 the spirit of God to enter the temple at the time
 when Jesus was brought there; as soon as the cere-
 mony was over, he took the blessed child into his 28.
 arms, and thus spoke: "Lord, now lettest thou 29.
 thy servant depart in peace, according to thy pro-
 mise. Mine eyes have now seen thy salvation; 30. 31.
 which is preparing to spread joy throughout all nations
 —the glory of Israel, and the light of the Gentiles." 32.
 — This holy prayer contributed still more to raise
 the joy and expectation of the pious parents. —
 Simeon blessed *them* also; and turning to Mary, 34. 35.
 This child, said he, shall make the great separation
 between good and bad. His doctrines shall be the
 test of man's sincerity. In the mean time, such
 will be the opposition against him, that I caution
 you, and all his followers, not to expect a time of
 earthly felicity, but a time of violence and perfe-
 ction.

Another holy person likewise, at that time, dwelt 36. 37.
 in Jerusalem, whose name was Anna. She had from
 an early period of her life been left a widow, and

31. It is plain that Simeon also, as well as Zacharias, had a
 clear idea of the nature of the Messiah's kingdom.

was now advanced to a very great age. She had ever been devoted to the service of God ; and was now favoured, as Simeon also was, with the spirit
 38. of prophecy.—This pious woman coming into the temple when Jesus was there, was seized with a divine impulse—gave thanks to God for this great completion of all his promises—and explained to the devout persons then present, the nature of the Messiah's kingdom, which was about to be established.

39. Joseph and Mary having now performed all the ceremonies which the law required, returned to
 40. Nazareth with Jesus ; who increased in wisdom as he increased in age ; and soon began to shew the effects of the divine grace upon him.

41. 42. When he was about twelve years of age, his parents took him with them again to Jerusalem to attend the passover, which they themselves constantly attended. On their return, they missed him ;
 43. 44. but as there was a great company of their relations and acquaintances going on before, they concluded he was among them ; and without farther solicitude
 45. continued their journey. But in the evening finding this was not the case, they returned to Jerusalem in great distress, and sought him in all parts of
 46. the city. At length they found him in one of the schools of the temple, listening to the doctors, as they

46. It is not probable they sought him *three days in Jerusalem* ; but that they found him on the *third day* after they had missed him.

they expounded the law; and asking such questions as shewed a wisdom which filled every one present with astonishment. His parents were surpris'd at finding him there: and his mother could not forbear asking him, Why he had been so inobservant of them, and had occasioned them so long and sorrowful a search? Jesus answered, How is it that you sought me? Where could I so properly be found as in my father's house? — Though they were far from clearly understanding what he said, yet Mary laid up this speech in her memory among the various other notices she had received of the great designs which God intended to bring about through her son. — After this, Jesus returned with his parents to Nazareth, and continued with them till he entered

him. Two days had already been spent in journeying and returning. — Our blessed Saviour is often *represented* on this occasion, as *sitting among the doctors*, and disputing with them; but the text implies nothing more than his sitting, as was enjoined to learners, *at their feet*. — The assembly of doctors here mentioned, was probably one of those schools where youth were examined, as was usual, with regard to their proficiency in the law.

49. The words in the original, *Εν τοις (αγίοις) τοις πατέροις μου*, seem very capable of this interpretation, which certainly gives more propriety to the sense. Why should you search for me, says our Saviour, with such solicitude? Could not you recollect, that it was most likely to find me — (not about his father's business, for that he might have been *any where*; but) in my father's house? — Dr. Doddridge, from the common interpretation of this passage, takes occasion to make a very affectionate address to his younger brethren of the ministry; whom he exhorts not to give up their time chiefly to the curiosities of learning, much less to amusements, but to attend to their principal function, lest in their last moments they may see reason to adopt the dying words of one of the greatest scholars of his time; *Proh! vitam perdidisti, operose nihil agendo; I have spent my life, in being at infinite pains to do nothing.*

52. on his ministry ; increasing in grace and favour with God and man.

CHAP. Such was the birth and early youth of these two
 III.
 { great personages, so nearly connected with each other ;
 i. 2. 3. John the Baptist and Jesus Christ. They were
 born in the fortieth year of Augustus Cæsar ; but
 it was not till the fifteenth of Tiberius, the succeeding
 emperor, that they entered upon their public
 ministry.

- At that time, by the express command of God,
 John was ordered to preach repentance to the people,
 and prepare them for the gospel, agreeably to
 4. 5. 6 the prophecy of Isaiah, *The voice of one crying in the
 wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord ; make his
 paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every
 mountain and hill shall be brought low ; and the crooked*

1. The date is ascertained in the text by the mention of the chief magistrates then presiding. Learned men have found great difficulty with regard to the fifteenth year of Tiberius. The point is discussed at large at the end of the first volume of Lardner's Credibility.—It is observable, that the names of two high priests are mentioned. The case was, that after the dominion of the Romans, great confusion was introduced into the high-priesthood : and indeed neither the evangelists nor Josephus are very exact in using the singular number, giving the name of high-priest sometimes to those priests next in order to the high-priest.—One thing with regard to the date is rather remarkable ; which is, that some learned men have calculated, that if the Jews had continued to observe their years of Jubilee, the fifteenth year of Tiberius would have fallen in with the last of them. This is an argument (if it can be proved) of some use against the Jews, who say, the Messiah will appear in the last Jubilee. Within the succeeding fifty years, the city and government were destroyed. Baufobre's Introd.

shall

shall be made straight ; and the rough way shall be made smooth : and all mankind shall see the salvation of God. — In preaching to the people, John in-
 veighed severely against sin, and the consequences of
 it — he explained to them the nature and end of true
 repentance — he told them, that all the peculiar pri-
 vileges of which the Jews boasted were now at an
 end — that God meant to raise up children to Abra-
 ham from all mankind — that the time of this great
 dispensation was now approaching, and that men
 ought well to consider the risk they ran in despising
 this last great offer of God's mercy. — Such was
 the general subject of John's exhortations. And
 when many well-disposed people asked him, What
 they should do ? He particularly recommended to
 them acts of charity and mercy. People also of
 different professions, publicans, and soldiers, repent-
 ing of their sins, and coming to his baptism, desired
 his instruction. To all of them he recommended an
 exact attention to those duties which their several
 employments led them most to transgress.

The gravity and authority of John's preaching
 occasioned a general suspense in the minds of men ;
 and most people were inclined to think him the Mes-
 siah. But John, with great warmth, checked all
 suppositions of that kind. I baptize you, said he,

8. See this idea explained Rom. iv.

14. *Do violence to no man ; neither accuse any falsely.* Commit none of those outrages which are common in war — nor as *delatores* (who were common among the Roman soldiery) carry up false accusations to your superiors.

P 4

only

- only with water : but that great person, for whom I am not worthy to perform the meanest offices, will baptize you with the Holy Ghost. I only *preach* to you ; but his superior office will be to *try the hearts* of men, and make the *final separation* between good and bad.
18. This was John's usual manner of addressing himself to the people : but thinking it his duty to exercise a freer kind of exhortation, on proper occasions, he ventured even to reprove Herod for his incestuous life. That prince, unable however to bear so free an adviser, added to his other crimes the imprisonment of John.
21. 22. But before that event took place, Jesus himself came, among others, to his baptism. In the midst of the devotion which attended that ceremony, it pleased God to give an awful testimony of the *divinity* of Jesus. The clouds opened, and a splendid light rested upon him ; from which a voice proclaimed, Thou art my beloved son : in thee I am well pleased.
- 23—38. — But with regard to his *earthly* parentage, he sprang

21. Read *Ιησους* here with the article *την*. When you observe a thing regularly done above six hundred times, as *Ιησους* with the article, and find it omitted, under the same circumstances, not above twenty times, we may fairly suppose a mistake in transcribing. *Ιησους*, without the article, is *one Jesus, any Jesus*. With the article it means *the Jesus*, of whom this history is written.

22. See a note on Matt. iii. 16.

23. Some critics suppose, that the pedigree of Jesus inserted here, was Mary's pedigree, and not Joseph's. Joseph, who is here called the son of Heli, is called in St. Matthew the son of Jacob. This difference they accommodated by an easy parenthesis in St. Luke's text ; *ως νομιζετε υιον Ιωσηφ* *την* *Ηλ* : *being* (though

sprang in a direct line from David, and was at this time about thirty years of age.

After his baptism, Jesus prepared himself for his ministry, by retiring, under the influence of the

CHAP.

IV.

(though supposed to be the son of Joseph) the son, or immediate male-descendant from Heli. This sense also the Talmud strengthens by calling Mary the daughter of Heli.—Some again suppose, that St. Matthew gives the *real progenitors* of Joseph; and St. Luke *David's heirs* through another channel. He omits Solomon, and takes Nathan: but in Salathiel both their genealogies unite. Other differences may be reconciled in the same way.—The Jewish mode of reckoning descents may also greatly assist us in reconciling the differences between St. Matthew and St. Luke. The Israelitish family was sometimes registered according to *nature*, and sometimes according to *law*, when the brother raised up seed to the brother. See Lardner's *Credibil.* Part II. ch. xxxvii.—Other solutions have already been given of the difficulties occasioned by these two genealogies. We may suppose the prophecy of Jesus's springing from the house of David to be fulfilled by his being the *reputed* or *legal* son of Joseph. See a note on Matt. i. 1. — Or we may suppose, that Joseph and Mary were both of the *same* family; and had therefore the same pedigree. See a note on Luke ii. 6. — After all, though there may be some obscurity with regard to these two genealogies at this late day, it is impossible to conceive the evangelists would have inserted them, if they had not known them at their time to be universally acknowledged. They carry the evidence of their authenticity along with them. Genealogies were publicly recorded, and easily compared. Whatever difficulty therefore may arise at this day, it is very plain there was none of early date: for among all the objections against Jesus as the Messiah, made by his countrymen, that of his not springing from the house of David, as far as I recollect, was never made.—It is supposed, that St. Luke's gospel was written chiefly for the use of the Gentiles; and one argument is taken from this pedigree, which is carried up to Adam, to shew that Christ was the *seed of the woman*; to which the promise was primarily annexed. The Jews, who rested chiefly on their own prophets, were satisfied with deriving his pedigree from David.

23. *About thirty years of age.* Our Saviour, no doubt, was qualified, long before this time, to enter upon his office. Why he deferred it thus long, we can only conjecture. It might be by way of example to future ministers; or, as this was the age when the high-priest was allowed to enter upon his office, it might be with a view to fulfil that type more completely.

Holy

- Holy Spirit, into the wilderness. Here he spent
 2. 3. forty days in fasting and prayer; and here the devil
 was permitted to tempt him. — The first tempta-
 tion was addressed to the necessities of nature. If
 thou be the son of God, said the devil, command
 4. this stone to be made bread. — Jesus answered him
 from the words of Moses, that the life of man was
 not so much sustained by natural, as by spiritual
 5. 6. 7. food. — The devil's next temptation was addressed
 to the passions. See, said he, from this lofty stand,
 all the glories of the world—its power, riches, and
 pleasures. All are mine; and shall be thine, if
 thou wilt devote thyself to me. — Jesus answered,
 8. Get thee behind me, Satan; for it is written, *Thou
 shalt worship the Lord, thy God; and him only shalt*
 9. 10. 11. *thou serve.* — The devil then displaying before him
 a scene like Jerusalem, and setting him on one of
 the battlements of the temple, desired him to give
 a proof of his being the son of God, by casting
 himself down from thence, and trusting God for
 his deliverance. — Jesus answered him from scrip-
 12. ture, *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God*—thou
 shalt

2. See the beginning of the fourth chapter of St. Matthew, together with the note.

2. *Being forty days tempted of the devil*, as our translation improperly renders it. Place a comma after *τεσσαράκοντα*, and the sense will be, *he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted of the devil.*

8. Deut. vi. 6.

9. See a note on Matt. iv. 5.

12. The order of these temptations is different in St. Matthew, where they seem more naturally introduced. The last temptation, which

shalt try no *experiments* of God's favour in thy preservation. — The devil being thus disappointed, left Jesus at present, in hopes of finding some more favourable opportunity of prevailing.

131

From the solitary regions of the wilderness, Jesus returned into Galilee; and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, entered on his public ministry, preaching the gospel, and confirming it with miracles; which soon spread his fame through the country.

14. 15.

Among other places he went to Nazareth, where he had spent his youth; and going, as he usually did, to the synagogue on the sabbath-day, he stood

16.

which St. Luke makes the second, was so abominable in its nature, that it seemed most likely to be that which occasioned Jesus to drive the devil from him. — Milton, however, in his *Paradise Regained*, thought otherwise. He follows St. Luke's order, and makes the devil carry on a regular chain of temptation from the first attempt to the last. As Jesus had shewn no inclination to the worldly vanities that had been set before him, Give then, said the devil, a proof of your being the son of God: Stand on this *pinnacle* of the temple, &c. which *pinnacle* Milton conceives to be a small pointed spire, on which no man could stand without a miracle. Jesus's divine power was to be shewn as well in standing on the pinnacle, as in throwing himself from it. — Though, in my opinion, Milton shews himself to no great advantage in *detailing* these temptations, yet, it must be owned, he brings Jesus off the pinnacle in a very noble manner.

— Strait a fiery globe
Of angels, on full sail of wing, drew nigh,
Who on their plummy vans received him soft
From his uneasy station, and upbore
As on a floating couch through the blithe air,
And in a flowery valley set him down.

16. *As his custom was.* A strong argument this to enforce the attendance on public worship.

up,

- up, as if he intended to read and expound the
17. scripture. The prophecy of Isaiah was put into his hands; which he opened in that place, where the prophet breaks out into the following passage:—
18. 19. “The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor—he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted—to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind—to set at liberty them that are bruised—to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”
20. 21. 22. —When Jesus had read this passage, he closed the book, and returning it to the minister, sat down. The dignity and grace of his behaviour made an impression on all who were in the synagogue: but they were much more impressed, when they heard him expound the passage, and assure them it was, at that time, fulfilling. —But these sentiments were only the first suggestions of candour. Their prejudices soon began to rise. His being the carpenter’s son was an offence which they could not get over; and soon led them to negligence and contempt.—
23. You call upon me, said Jesus, to do mighty works among you; but you consider not, that the disposition of the person on whom a miracle is wrought,

17. *He opened the book*: that is, he *unfolded* it; for the Jewish books were written on long scrolls of parchment, folded over two rollers, one at each end. *Opening the book* therefore was unfolding one end, and folding the other.

19. Our Saviour plainly alludes to the year of Jubilee, the typical meaning of which he takes to himself. See a note on chap. lxi. of Lowth’s Isaiah, p. 260.

20. It was usual to *stand* when the scripture was *read*; but it was commonly *expounded* in a sitting posture.

must operate with the power of him who works the miracle. Your prejudices against me, because I am your countryman, have blinded your eyes, and indisposed you to receive the truth. Many were the widows of Israel, during the famine in the days of Elijah; and many were the lepers of Israel in the days of Elisha: but none of their own countrymen were relieved by those prophets, though the mercy of God was extended to a widow of Sidon, and a leper of Syria. So shall it also be with you. Strangers and foreigners shall receive those favours from God, of which you render yourselves unworthy. — This discourse threw the whole synagogue into a rage; and a tumult immediately ensuing, they carried Jesus to the precipice on which the city was built, with an intention to throw him down: but he miraculously avoided their malice, and left the place.

27. The passage with regard to Naaman the Syrian, 2 Kings v. 17. is ill-translated in our bible, and may lead people into undue compliances. "*Thy servant, says Naaman to Elisha, will henceforth offer neither burnt-offering, nor sacrifice unto other Gods, but unto the Lord. In this thing the Lord pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, when I bow myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing.*" All this the prophet approves, and bids him *Go in peace.* But the passage has a very different air when it is translated thus: *Thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt-offering, nor sacrifice unto other Gods, but unto the Lord. In this thing the Lord pardon thy servant, that when my master went into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaned on my hand, and I bowed myself in the house of Rimmon, when I bowed myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon, &c.* See Lightfoot's Hebrew, and Talmud. Exercit. vol. ii. p. 408.

30. We have very few instances of Jesus's evading his enemies by a miracle: he generally did it by discreet and prudent behaviour. See a note on Matt. xii. 16. Some have thought, among whom was Tertullian, that no miracle is here intended: but I see not how such a transaction could happen without one.

From

31. From Nazareth Jesus went to Capernaum, where
 also he instructed the people in the synagogue on the
 32. sabbath. Here he was received in a different man-
 ner. The doctrine he taught, and the miracles by
 which he confirmed it, made a great impression on
 many of the inhabitants of that town.

33. It happened, as he was one day teaching in the
 synagogue, that a person possessed with an evil spirit,
 being there, called out to him, expressing his own
 34. terrors, and acknowledging the divine power of
 35. Jesus. — Jesus commanded the evil spirit to leave
 the man : on which he fell down convulsed, in the
 midst of the congregation, and appeared as if dead.
 But he soon recovered, and was perfectly restored.

36. 37. — This great miracle spread the fame of Jesus
 throughout all the country.

38. From the synagogue Jesus returned to Simon's
 house, whose mother-in-law was then lying sick of a
 39. fever. Jesus being informed of it, healed her im-
 mediately ; and she waited on them at supper.

40. 41. On the fame of these miracles, numbers were
 brought to him that evening, sick of various dis-
 eases, and several that were possessed with evil spirits.
 All of them were healed ; and the evil spirits, who
 knew him, were not suffered to speak. Such testi-
 mony he abhorred.

34. Rather, *What hast thou to do with us?*

41. See a note on Mark i. 34.

45. This verse does not seem to be properly rendered in our
 translation. It should be, *He suffered them not to declare (or)
 THAT they knew him.*

Early the next morning, he retired to a desert place. But the people, discovering his retreat, crowded around him, and could scarce be persuaded to suffer him to leave them, though he told them he was under a necessity to preach the gospel in other places. — From hence, therefore, he went into different parts of Galilee, where he preached sometimes in the synagogues, and sometimes in open places.

42. 43.

44.

As he was walking by the side of the lake of Tiberias, the people attended him in great numbers: and as he could not well be heard, while the crowd was pressing around him, he went into a boat belonging to Simon, whom he desired to push a little from the shore. In this commodious situation he taught the people. — Having finished his discourse, he desired Simon to row farther into the lake, and let down his net. Simon told him, he had been toiling all the night without effect; nevertheless, at his desire, he would make another attempt. To his great astonishment, the quantity of fishes he now inclosed was so prodigious, that he found his net unable to drag them on shore. He called therefore to his companions in another boat to assist him; and so amazing was the draught, that both boats were completely filled. — Struck with this miracle, Simon fell down on his knees before Jesus, and confessed his own unworthiness. James also, and John, Simon's partners, were equally astonished. Jesus, who had wrought the miracle to represent Simon's future success

CHAP.
V.

1. 2. 3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8. 9. 10.

success in preaching the gospel, told him, that, from henceforward, he *should catch men*. As soon as they
 11. came to land, all the three forsook every thing they
 12. had and followed Jesus. — Accompanied by these disciples he continued to preach the gospel through Galilee.

In one of the towns of this district, a person greatly afflicted with a leprosy came to him; and falling down before him, acknowledged his divine power, and begged his assistance. Jesus laying his hand
 13. 14. upon him, instantly healed him; and forbidding him to divulge the matter, ordered him to present himself to the priest; and on the certification of his cure, to offer the sacrifice commanded by the law.
 15. 16. — The miracle, however, was soon known; and brought such numbers about Jesus, that he was obliged frequently to retire into solitary places, merely to find leisure for prayer, and the necessary refreshments of nature.

Some time after, as he was teaching in a house where several of the Scribes and Pharisees were

10. This expression is used both by St. Matt. (iv. 19.) and St. Mark (i. 17.); but neither of these passages conveys more than the simple idea of *fishers of men*. But St. Luke's words (*αἰσχροὶ ἐσσι ζῴοντες*) carry a more expressive idea: you *shall take them alive* — not with a design to kill them as you do fish, but to preserve them.

16. The words in the original, I think, imply, that it was his common practice to retire occasionally from the crowd to meditation and devotion.

17. *The power of the Lord was present to heal them*; that is, to heal the people, not the Scribes and Pharisees, as the grammatical construction of the words import.

present,

present, who had come privately from Jerusalem and other places to observe him, he wrought the following miracle : — The friends of a certain paralytic, bringing the sick man to him on a couch, and finding the door surrounded by such crowds as prevented their entrance, they went round, and ascending the roof, let him down on his bed before Jesus. On such an instance of faith, Jesus told the man his sins were forgiven. This raised high offence among the Scribes and Pharisees, who in their own minds charged him with blasphemy. But Jesus knowing their thoughts, asked, whether they thought it easier to forgive the man's sins, or to heal his malady? That you may know, however, said he, I can do the one, you shall see me perform the other. He then bade the man arise, and take up his bed, and walk. On this he was instantly healed, and broke out in thanksgiving to God, in which the people universally joined him.

Soon after, as Jesus was walking into the country, he saw Levi, a publican, collecting the Roman tribute; and calling him, Levi, without the least hesitation, became his follower.

Jesus, being afterwards invited to the house of his new disciple, sat down at table with many people of

19. See a note on Mark ii. 4.

20. See a note on Matt. ix. 2.

23. How Christ, as a *mere man*, could take upon him to forgive sin, is not easy, I think, to understand. Blasphemous it certainly would have been, as the Scribes and Pharisees considered it.

loose characters, who had been Levi's former acquaintances. — At this the Scribes and Pharisees found new matter of offence: How is it, said they to the disciples of Jesus, that your master sits down to meat with publicans and sinners? — Jesus over-hearing them, desired to know, Whether the sick or the healthy had more need of a physician? Or, in other words, whether they thought his errand was to call the righteous man or the sinner to repentance?

Being confounded by this question, they asked another on the same subject. Whence is it, said they, that our disciples and the disciples of John are bound by rigid rules to fasting, and other austerities, while yours are left much at liberty? — Jesus told them, it was not yet the season to put his disciples on austerities. Would you have men fast, said he, at a marriage-feast? My disciples shall have their time of trial when I leave them. But a new patch does not suit worse with an old garment, nor new wine with old bags, than rigid rules with young professors. Things must be accommodated to circumstances; and old prejudices cannot be broken at once.

CHAP. VI. On another occasion, soon after, the same determined spirit of cavilling appeared again. On a sab-

I.

39. The difficulty of the passage lies in this: Old wine is generally esteemed more than new. But our Saviour, in this comparison, does not consider the *quality*, but the *age* of the wine.

.. bath-

bath-day; Jesus was passing through a corn-field; and his disciples, being hungry, plucked the ears of corn, which they rubbed in their hands, and eat. This was observed by the Pharisees, who were greatly offended at such a profanation of the sabbath. Jesus reminded them of the practice of David; asking them, If they did not remember how he had acted in a case of necessity? How he eat the shew-bread, and gave it to his followers, though the law allowed it only to the priests? — Besides, said Jesus, the son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

On another sabbath, as he was teaching in the synagogue, a man happened to be there with a withered hand; and as Jesus knew that the Scribes and Pharisees were watching him, he ordered the man, before he healed him, to stand out in the middle of the synagogue. Then turning to the Pharisees, Which think you, said he, is the more acceptable service to God, on the sabbath-day; to do a good action, or a

v. In the text the words are *the second sabbath after the first*. This is a difficult passage, though not very interesting. One explanation is, that the Jews observed with *peculiar attention* three sabbaths in the year; one after each of their great feasts — the passover — the pentecost, and the feast of tabernacles: so that *the second sabbath after the first*, was the middle sabbath, or the sabbath after the feast of pentecost. — Others say, it was the first sabbath after the second day of the passover, from which day the seven weeks between the passover and pentecost were reckoned. These interpreters translate St. Luke's word *δεύτερον πρῶτος* *the first after the second*: *πρῶτος ἀπὸ τῆς δευτέρας*. — But there seems to be much uncertainty in these explanations: and the time of harvest, for the corn was then ripe, should be brought into the question.

bad one? — to save a life, or to practice against one?

10. — No answer being returned, he looked at them with mingled sorrow and indignation, and bad the
 11. man stretch out his hand, which was instantly re-
 stored. — Full of rage at the detection of their
 guilt, and at their being unable to reply, the Phari-
 12. sees left the place, and consulted how they might
 take more effectual means to destroy Jesus. — He,
 in the mean time, retired to a solitary mountain,
 where he continued all night in a house of prayer.

13. The next day he chose twelve (whom he called
 14. apostles) from such as had been his constant follow-
 15. 16. ers. Their names were Simon, whom he surnamed
 Peter, and Andrew his brother, James, John, Phi-
 lip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the
 son of Alphaeus, Simon the Canaanite, Judas the
 brother of James, and Judas Iscariot.

12. Our translation renders *εν τη προσευχη τῷ Θεῷ* in prayer to God. But it is very evident, that a *proseuche*, or house of prayer, is here meant. These houses were very frequent in the earlier times of the Jewish history; and being often situated on mountains, and sheltered by trees, are supposed to be the *high places*, which were not always taken in a bad sense. In the latter periods of the Jewish history, when synagogues became more in use, the *proseuche* was less frequented. — As the designation of the twelve apostles follows so immediately after our blessed Lord had spent a night in devotion, it is not improbable that this great circumstance might have been a chief subject of his prayers.

15. He is called in the text *ζηλωτης* or the zealot. Josephus speaks of the zealots in his time, as great pretenders to religion, and among the worst sort of people. But forty years before, when Simon was a zealot, we may suppose the name conveyed a different idea.

From

From the mountain where this transaction passed, ^{17.18.19.} Jesus came down into the plain, where a great mul- ^{20.} titude of people were assembled, many from very distant parts, to hear his doctrine, and to be healed of various disorders. When that benevolent work was finished, he delivered the following discourse. — Blessed are the meek, the modest, the humble, and lowly-minded — they who are above this world and its enjoyments. These alone are properly disposed to receive my religion. — Blessed are they ^{21.22.23} who suffer the evils of life, and the contempt of mankind, for the sake of the gospel — who, like the prophets of old, stand foremost in defence of truth. These shall secure their future happiness: while they ^{24.25.26.}

17. St. Matthew expressly says, this discourse was held on a *mount*: St. Luke as expressly, that it was held on a *plain*. To settle this contradiction hath been a matter of great difficulty. Grotius supposes, that St. Luke's *τοπος πεδινος*, was a *plain on the side of a mountain*. Dr. Clarke supposes, that Jesus returned again from the plain to the mountain. Others suppose the same discourse was held at different times. I own, I think it of little consequence; and that it may well be reckoned among those matters which have no kind of effect on the narration, and to which the evangelists themselves paid no attention. If the *doctrine* be the same, as it certainly is, of what consequence is the *scene*? — However, for the sake of those who think it of importance, I shall venture to add my solution to that of others. — A passage may be produced from Cæsar's Commentaries, which, I think, may throw some light upon it. Cæsar tells us, that when Ariovistus and he agreed on a conference, they chose for that purpose a *mount in the midst of a plain*. *Planities erat magna, et in ea tumulus terreus, satis grandis*. On this *mount* the two chiefs held their conference; while the troops they brought with them stood around them on the *plain*. If therefore we suppose the scene, where our Saviour held this divine discourse to be of the kind which Cæsar describes, and that he stood upon the mount while the people occupied the plain, his discourse may be stiled either *the sermon on the mount*, or *the sermon in the plain*.

- who have recourse to the world for their joys, their pleasures, and their comforts, like the false prophets, must expect from the world also their reward. —
27. As it is not from the world that you are to seek for happiness, so neither is it from the world that you are to learn instruction. All its doctrines must be
28. left behind. In opposition to them, in the first place, love your enemies. Bless when they curse. Pray
29. for them when they treat you ill. Never revenge an injury : suffer even a second and a third, rather than
30. 31. return a first. — Be readier to give than to exact. Let your rule be, to do to others whatever in reason
32. 33. 34. you could expect from them. For if you love and assist them merely who love and assist you, you do
35. only what a heathen himself would do. But if you would love and assist others on the principles of my religion, expect no return from man, but dedicate
36. your good actions to God ; imitating that supreme benefactor, who is kind even to those who least deserve his favour. — In the mean time, beware of
37. 38. spiritual pride. Let not an opinion of yourselves lead you to censure others. An uncharitable heart is among those things which are the most unacceptable to God. Be as ready, therefore, to forgive the

35. Bowyer conjectures, that *μὴν ἀπελπίζετε* should be rendered, *in no wise despairing* : but I like the common translation better, which is more simple ; and I apprehend there are good authorities for it.

38. *Shall men give into your bosom*, says the text. This is an allusion to the long mantles the Jews wore, in which the common people used often to carry corn and other things. See Ruth. iii. 15. Neh. v. 13.

offences

offences of others, as to impart to them what you
 possess; being well assured, that God's treatment of
 you will be in a great measure conformable to your
 treatment of your neighbour. — But, above all, it 39.
 behoves those who guide others to keep their own
 steps direct. If the blind lead the blind, the con-
 sequence must be fatal to both. My disciples will 40.
 have their difficulties to oppose — but none which I
 shall not have opposed before them: and the aim of
 a disciple should be to conform himself to the exam-
 ple of his master. — Try your own hearts. Before 41. 42.
 you correct your brother, examine yourself. It is
 the vilest hypocrisy to exclaim against his corruptions,
 while you allow your own. If true religion lie at 43.
 the heart, it will as naturally produce a good life as
 a tree does its fruit. The good life is the test. It 44 45. 46.
 is this, not an hypocritical pretence to religion, which
 discovers the man. He, therefore, who receives the 47.
 doctrines of the gospel, and, at the same time, stea-
 dily obeys them, is established, like a house built on
 a rock; it stands so firm that nothing can overturn 48.
 it. While he who leaves out of his religion a good 49.
 life, builds his house upon the sand, which can never
 furnish a solid foundation †.

When

48. The observations made here arise very aptly in such a mountainous and rocky country as Judea. The hills are slightly covered with earth; and the rains, which are very violent, are apt to overturn such houses as have not their foundations well laid.

† As St. Luke is supposed to have written his gospel for the use of the heathen, he might leave out of the sermon perhaps

CHAP.
VII.

When Jesus had finished his discourse to the people, he went to Capernaum: and as he entered the town he was met by some respectable Jews, who told him, they were sent by a Roman centurion to beg him to heal a favourite servant. The centurion, they assured him, was a person of a very serious disposition, and well affected to the Jewish nation, having at his own expence built a synagogue. Jesus immediately went with them. But as he approached the house, the centurion sent to inform him that he did not think himself worthy even to approach him — but desired him only to speak a word; and he had no doubt but his servant should be healed — adding, that if he himself, who was only an inferior officer in an army, could order the motions of others at distance, he was persuaded that Jesus had such power over nature, that he might command what he pleased. — This message was delivered to Jesus before a number of people; to whom he immediately said, he had not found such an instance of faith even in Israel. — The messengers, on returning home, found the servant perfectly recovered.

many passages, particularly those which had relation to the glosses on the law, as they appertained chiefly to the Jews.

10. The *circumstances* of St. Luke's account of the centurion's servant differ so much from St. Matthew's, that no harmonizer, I think, can bring the two relations together with any consistence. At the same time, all that is *really essential* in them both, is so *exactly the same*, that, for myself, I feel not the least wish to do it. Both the evangelists place the faith of the centurion, and the greatness of the miracle (which are the only points in view) in a light equally strong.

Soon

Soon after, as Jesus was entering a city called Nain, with his disciples and a number of people, he met a poor widow accompanied by a great multitude, following an only son to his grave. Jesus, touched with her sorrow, spake comfortably to her, and ordered the bearers to stand still. Then looking on the dead person, he bade him arise. On this he was instantly restored to perfect health. — This great miracle drew upon Jesus the respect and reverence of all who were present; and spread his fame not only through Judea, but through all the neighbouring countries.

In the mean time, the disciples of John, fearing lest the fame of Jesus should arise above that of their master, told him all they had heard. — John, who was still in prison, thinking it the best way of instructing them, to make them instruct themselves, sent two of them to Jesus, desiring to know, Whether he were the real Messiah? — They accordingly delivered their message. But Jesus taking no immediate notice of them, continued the gracious work of healing the sick, in which he happened to be at that time engaged: and when he had done, he bade them tell their master what they had seen and heard — pronouncing a blessing on those who should

12. It was a custom among the Jews, that all who met a corpse should join the procession. This made these processions often very large.

19. See the note on the parallel place in Matt. xi.

get the better of their prejudices; and, from what they saw, should acknowledge and trust in the Messiah.

24. 25. 26. When the two disciples were gone, Jesus spoke
27. 28. highly to the people of John. Your expectations, said he, were justly raised when you attended that holy man in the wilderness. You expected to see a prophet, and you saw one of the greatest that ever appeared. The prophets of old only predicted the Messiah: but the dignity of John's office consisted in preparing his way. And yet the office of those who are directly employed in preaching the gospel, 29. is superior even to that of John. — But though such numbers, added Jesus, went out to hear John, yet the meek and humble sinner only listened to his 30. instruction, and was brought to repentance. The Scribes and Pharisees, too proud to learn, rejected 31. 32. God's gracious offers of mercy. To what shall I compare this unteachable spirit? Like the frowardness of children, which is averse to every thing that is proposed, it will listen neither to one kind of 33. instruction nor another. John appeared with austerity. His doctrine therefore could not be endured. 34. It was the language of a man possessed. I come with less severity; suiting myself more to social life. The conclusion is, I am a friend of publicans and 35. sinners. But the wisdom of God will finally shew itself in all his dispensations.

36. Some time after, Jesus was invited to the house
37. 38. of a Pharisee, whose name was Simon; where a woman,

woman, who had been a notorious sinner, coming in as they were at table. and standing at the feet of Jesus, shewed her love and respect for him by very extraordinary acts of humility and attention. — Simon, observing her behaviour, said within himself, Surely if this person had been a prophet, he might have known how very notorious a sinner this woman is, and would have been disgusted at her familiarity. — Simon, said Jesus, I have somewhat to say to you. A certain creditor had two debtors; one of whom owed him a large sum; the other a trifling one. But, as neither of them was able to pay, he forgave them both. Which of them, think you, will shew the greater regard and affection to him? — I suppose, answered Simon, that he to whom he forgave most. — It is true, said Jesus; and thus the returning sinner, like this woman, shews more extraordinary instances of zeal and love than if her sins had been fewer. For that reason, therefore, such a person as this before me is so far from being an object of reproof, that she becomes an object of pity and pardon. You yourself are a witness how much her zeal hath exceeded all common bounds. — Then turning to the woman, he bid her go in peace, assuring her that, in consideration of her faith, her penitence, and love, her sins were forgiven. — This gave new offence to the Pharisee, and those who were

39.

40. 41.

42.

43.

44-45-46.

47. 48. 49.

50.

47. See Matt. ix. 2. and Mark ii. 5.

with him. However, no farther notice was taken of the matter at that time †.

CHAP. VIII.
 1. 2. 3. From hence Jesus went among the neighbouring villages, preaching the gospel, attended by his disciples, and many others, who waited on him and administered to his necessities; particularly Mary of Magdala, whom he had dispossessed of several evil spirits, and Joanna the wife of Herod's steward.

4. It was about this time that Jesus delivered the parable of the sower to a large and mixed company.

† This account of Simon's supper is introduced on so different an occasion, and varies, in so many particulars, from the accounts of Matthew (xxvi. 6.) and Mark (xiv. 3.) that many commentators have been led to consider them as totally different events. At the same time, they agree in so many circumstances, that it is not easy to come at this conclusion. It appears most probable, that all the evangelists allude to the same fact. St. Luke, it is true, introduces it earlier in the history. The other evangelists place it near the time of our Saviour's death; with which they connect it, and with which indeed it connects with more apparent propriety. But, excepting this circumstance, we may suppose that Matthew and Mark mention what Jesus said to the woman; and Luke, what he might say, at the same time to Simon. Or (if this does not appear probable) how would the truth of scripture suffer if we should suppose, that Luke might relate, on *this* occasion, the parable of the two debtors, though it was really spoken on *some similar one*? The doctrines and truths conveyed are the great points; and these are exactly the same, on whatever occasion they were spoken.

2. Mary Magdalen is commonly conceived to have been a very bad woman before her knowledge of Christ: but no such intimation appears from this or any other passage of scripture: unless we *suppose* her to be the person mentioned by Luke in the last chapter: though some interpreters, especially Dr. Lightfoot, speak of a town called Magdala, near Jerusalem, of very corrupt manners, where they suppose Mary had been tainted. See Lightfoot's Heb. and Tal. Exerc. vol. ii. p. 567.

Under

Under this similitude he presented a view of the gospel-dispensation, and of its effects on different kinds of men. — As a husbandman, said he, was sowing his seed, some fell on the beaten road, and were picked up by birds. Others falling on a rocky soil, sprang up indeed, but soon withered for want of moisture. Some again fell among thorns, which grew up together with the seed, and choked it. But such as fell on good ground, prepared to receive it, brought forth fruit in great abundance †. This parable Jesus recommended with much earnestness to the attention of his hearers.

When the disciples were alone with him, they asked him privately the meaning of it. — To you, said Jesus, I can speak without reserve: but to the people in general I speak in parables. Their prejudices shut their ears against *direct instruction*. They must be drawn, as it were, to *instruct themselves*. — With regard to the parable, the seed is the gospel. The beaten path represents those hardened hearts which never receive it. The shallow soil, where the seed is scorched, holds out those who cannot bear the test of persecution; and the weedy soil,

† This parable, which is indeed a very beautiful one, seems, in a particular manner, to have engaged the attention of the disciples of Jesus. The three evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, especially the two former, have recorded it in words so nearly similar, that I think it not improbable this, and perhaps some other parts of our Saviour's discourses, might have been preserved in writing, and handed about among his followers before his whole history was put together.

10. I dare not assert this to be the express meaning of the original; but I know none more consistent.

those

those whose religion is choaked by the cares and pleasures of the world : while the good ground gives us the resemblance of those who, in the sincerity of their pious hearts, hear the gospel and obey it.

15. — And now, continued Jesus, it will be expected from you, that you teach the doctrines to others which you receive from me. No man lights a candle to cover it up ; but placeth it where it may give light to those who enter the house. And be assured, that I tell you nothing in private which is not intended to be published and explained to all the world. Be attentive, therefore, to what you hear. He who improves his talents by instructing others, shall abound more and more : while he, who misapplies them, shall loose by degrees those talents which he possessed.

19. 20. As Jesus was thus instructing the people, he was told that his mother and brethren, who could not get to him through the crowd, desired to see him. He took this opportunity (as he did all others of conveying instruction,) to shew how much he preferred such connections as were founded in religion, to those which arose only from family and tribe.

21. These, said he, are indeed my natural relations ; but I consider such chiefly as related to me who hear the word of God and obey it.

22. Jesus having finished his instructions to the people, ordered his disciples to procure a boat to pass over the lake ; and as soon as they had embarked he fell asleep.

asleep. In the mean time, a violent storm, as is common in mountainous countries, came down suddenly upon the lake, and endangered the vessel. But Jesus being awakened by their cries of distress, immediately commanded a calm. He then rebuked their want of trust in him, after they had seen so many instances of his power. But they, instead of giving him any answer, were lost in wonder and amazement, as if this had been the first miracle he had ever wrought.

The boat soon landed them in the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite to the coasts of Galilee. Here he was met by a raging demoniac, who had long been the annoyance of the neighbourhood. Often they had attempted to bind and secure him; but such was his strength, that he broke his chains, and fled into these solitary places, where he dwelt among the tombs. On seeing Jesus, he ran to him; and kneeling down, acknowledged his divine power, and intreated that he might not be ordered into a place of torment. On Jesus's questioning the man, he said his name was Legion; intimating, that this possession was a combination of evil spirits. — It happened, there was a herd of swine feeding near the place, into which, on Jesus's permission, the evil spirits entered after they had left the man;

27. The text says, *there met him out of the city*. The words of the original, *ἐκ τῆς πόλεως*, have not that meaning. They signify only, *of the city, or formerly belonging to the city*.

28. Better, *What hast thou to do with us?*

and immediately the whole herd ran violently down
 34. a precipice into the lake, and were drowned. The
 keepers flying into the city, and relating what had
 35. happened, great multitudes came out; who seeing
 the man sitting, clothed, and in his perfect senses,
 36. while they heard all the particulars on the spot, were
 37. greatly terrified, and intreated Jesus to leave them.
 Finding therefore they were not yet in a disposition to
 receive the gospel, he embarked again, and repassed
 38. the lake. The man whom he had healed would
 39. gladly have accompanied him; but Jesus chose rather
 to make an impression on the people, in favour of
 the gospel, by leaving among them a standing mo-
 nument of its power and truth.

40. On his returning to the other side of the lake, a
 crowd of people, who were waiting for him, received
 41. 42. 43. him with great joy. — Among them was the ruler of
 a synagogue, of the name of Jairus, who, advancing
 from the rest, and falling at the feet of Jesus, besought
 him to go home with him and heal his daughter, an
 only child, who lay at the point of death. Jesus
 therefore went with him, attended by many people.

It happened, that among them was a poor woman,
 who had laboured many years, under a bloody flux,
 which had been deemed incurable. This person
 having heard of the fame of Jesus, and wishing to

33. See the note on Matt. viii. 32.

37. See the note on Matt. ix. 24.

receive a private cure, thought, if she could only touch his garment, it would be sufficient. Accordingly she made the experiment, and found the desired effect. — Jesus, however, unwilling that such an instance of faith should pass unobserved, turning round, asked who touched him? The disciples were surprised at the question, as the crowd was pressing him in every direction. But Jesus persisted in his inquiry; and the woman, perceiving she could not be concealed, fell down at his feet, in great confusion, and confessed the truth. Jesus commending publicly her great faith, which was all he designed, bad her go in peace.

During this transaction, a messenger came from Jairus's house, to prevent giving Jesus any farther trouble, as the young woman was now dead. But Jesus, turning to the afflicted father, bad him only believe, and he should yet receive her again. — When they arrived at the house, Jesus suffered nobody to enter the chamber with him, but Peter, James and John, and the father and mother of the young woman. There finding the mourners making great lamentations, he told them, they should see only the common effects of sleep. But they were ready to deride him, knowing certainly that she was dead. Jesus, however, removing them from the chamber, took her by the hand and bad her rise: on which she instantly revived. He then ordered food to be given her, and bad the astonished parents keep the matter to themselves.

CHAP. About this time, Jesus sent out his twelve disciples

IX.

to preach the gospel in Judea, and gave them power
1. 2. to confirm the truth of it by miracles. Make no
3. preparation, said he, for your journey. Take no-
4. thing superfluous. Be easily satisfied with your ac-
5. commodations; and leave those who will not receive
6. you to the judgment of God. — With these in-
structions the apostles went out, and executed their
commission with great success.

7. 8. The fame of Jesus was now so much increased,
that Herod became greatly perplexed about him.
Some supposed him to be Elijah, or one of the old
9. prophets arisen from the dead. But what chiefly
distressed Herod, was the fear of his being John the
Baptist, whom he had unjustly beheaded. These
thoughts wrought much upon him; and he was very
desirous to see Jesus.

10. In the mean time the apostles returned from their
mission, and related to their master the particulars
of it. That they might be the more private, Jesus
retired with them to a solitary place near Bethsaida.
11. — But his retreat was presently discovered; and
a great crowd coming together, broke in upon his
retirement, and engaged him in the offices of teach-
12. ing, and healing the sick. — Night drawing on, his
disciples begged he would dismiss the people, as

5. See a note on Matt. x. 14.

they

they could neither get lodging nor victuals in that solitary place. But Jesus finding they had five loaves and two fishes, ordered them to make the multitude, which consisted of about five thousand people, sit down in companies of fifty together. Then giving thanks, he brake the loaves and fishes in pieces, and gave them to his disciples to distribute among the people; who were not only satisfied, but left behind them fragments, which filled twelve baskets.

From hence Jesus retired to private prayer; and being afterwards alone with his disciples, he asked them, (as they had just been preaching in the country,) What was the general opinion of men about him? — They answered, that some said he was John the Baptist — some Elijah — and others, one of the old prophets arisen from the dead. — Jesus then asked them, Whom they themselves supposed him to be? — Peter immediately answered, The promised Messiah. — Jesus, however, ordered them not to mention him, at present, under that name. Before this great truth, said he, shall be fully cleared, I must suffer from the malice of the chief priests and Scribes, and even be put to death. But, on the third day, I will rise again. Whoever, therefore, means to be my disciple, must follow my painful steps. To save your lives at the expence of your religion is the greatest loss; and to lose your lives for its sake, the greatest gain. For what is a man profited, if he should gain the whole world, at the

26. expence of his soul?—Consider also with what confusion that man shall meet my displeasure at the day of judgment, who has shewn a disregard for the
27. gospel during his life upon earth. But for your comfort, be assured, that you shall see manifest instances of my power, even in the course of the present generation, and shall have full conviction of the reality of my kingdom.
28. A few days after this, with a view to give his disciples a foretaste of that glory which might serve to comfort them under the sufferings he had been representing, he carried Peter, James, and John to
29. the top of a mountain, where, after prayer, his whole person took suddenly a resplendent form; his very
30. garment became luminous. On his right and left stood the two great prophets of the law, Moses and
31. Elijah, arrayed in the same glory. They seemed in earnest conversation with Jesus; and were heard distinctly to speak of the great event he was about
32. to accomplish at Jerusalem. — The disciples had been at first asleep, while Jesus was praying; but immediately awaking, they saw the whole; and Peter,
33. in an ecstasy, cried out to Jesus, Lord, let us fix

31. St. Luke, by giving this circumstance, (omitted by the other evangelists,) adds a wonderful force to the narrative. These two great prophets, by talking of the sufferings of the Messiah at Jerusalem, seem thus in a visible manner, as it were, to concentrate the whole body of prophecy in Jesus. Some critics think, that by the word *ἐξομν* is meant rather his ascension than his death.

32. See a note on Matt. xvii. 3.

this

this glorious scene, and build tabernacles for thee, 34.
 for Moses, and for Elijah. — As he was speaking,
 a dark cloud overspread the whole vision, and cast a
 momentary terror over the minds of the disciples.
 As it passed by them, a voice broke from it, This 35.
 is my beloved Son, hear him. When the cloud had 36.
 passed, the vision was gone, and Jesus was left stand-
 ing alone with his disciples as before. — By his
 order, this transaction was kept private among them-
 selves, till after his resurrection.

The next morning, as he descended the mountain, 37.
 he found a great crowd assembled; from which a
 person advancing, kneeled down before him, be- 38.
 seeching him to have mercy on his only son, who
 was possessed by an evil spirit, under which he had 39.
 suffered greatly. I hoped, said he, that your disci- 40.
 ples could have relieved him; but they could not,
 — Jesus then rebuking his disciples for their want 41.
 of faith, ordered the man to bring his son to him.
 — This threw the youth into new agonies and con- 42.
 vulsions; but Jesus immediately relieved him, and
 delivered him perfectly restored to his father,

This wonderful cure drawing the admiration of all 43.
 who were present on Jesus, he feared the effect it
 might have on the minds of his disciples, and took 44.
 an opportunity to fix their attention again on the
 sufferings which he had told them he must soon
 undergo at Jerusalem. — But they had little con- 45. 46.
 ception of what he meant and were much inclined

to give way to worldly hopes and expectations. —

47. Jesus, to repress these undue notions, in his accustomed manner, by a sensible representation, took a child, and told them, that they who could not lay
48. aside their worldly prejudices, and imitate such innocence as was then before them, were neither qualified to receive the gospel, nor to inherit the kingdom of heaven. That person, said he, will there be greatest, who in this world considers himself as the least.

- 49-50. On this occasion John testifying his zeal, told Jesus, They had seen a person attempting to cast out devils in his name; but as he was not a disciple, they had forbidden him. Jesus, checking this forwardness, said, he wished to consider every one as for him, who did not openly appear against him.

51. The passover was now approaching, and Jesus, resolving to go to Jerusalem, to finish his ministry
52. there by his death, sent some of his disciples into a Samaritan city, through which he was to pass, to make some preparation for him and his company.
53. But the Samaritans, finding he was going to the passover at Jerusalem, refused to admit him, because of
54. their enmity to the Jews. James and John, resenting this indignity, begged their master to call fire from heaven to consume them, as Elijah had done on

54. See 2 Kings, i. 10.

a like occasion. But Jesus rebuked their improper zeal. You understand not, said he, the mild temper of the gospel. What might become a Jewish prophet in the court of an idolatrous prince, would ill suit a minister of my religion. He took no notice, therefore of the ill-treatment he had found among the Samaritans, but went to another village.

About this time he discovered the false pretences of some who attended him on worldly motives. The zeal of one he cooled, by trying whether he had faith sufficient to give up his temporal expectations for the gospel. Another, whom he invited to be his disciple, begged first to wait till his father's death that he might settle his affairs. A third expressed his readiness to preach the gospel; but he first desired to take leave of his friends. Jesus looking on all these as worldly excuses, observed, that no man, who was in earnest a disciple of the gospel, would make it the *first* employment of his thoughts to seek for a reason for not immediately closing with it.

Jesus, at this time, added seventy other disciples to his twelve apostles; and sent them, two together,

CHAR.
X.
to 1.

62. *No man having put his hand to the plough, &c.* St. Luke alone mentions this adage. Hesiod's instructions to a ploughman are not a bad illustration of it. *The good ploughman, says he, must keep his eye intent on his work, and not gaze about; that he may make a straight furrow.* Hes. Epy. lib. ii. v. 61.

1. St. Luke is the only evangelist who has given us an account of the seventy. This makes the ancient tradition more

2. to preach in different towns and villages, intending himself to follow them. The harvest, said he, is truly abundant; pray to God for more labourers
3. to reap it. Encounter with meekness the violence
4. of the world. Carry nothing superfluous with you. Keep the great errand you are sent on always in
5. 6. view. Bless the house you enter. Your blessing will either rest upon it, if there be any disposed to receive it, or it will return in comfort to yourselves.
7. 8. Be easily satisfied and contented, where you are first received. Be labourers worthy of your hire; and shew yourselves not solicitous about worldly accom-
9. modations. Heal the sick; and exhort men every where to prepare for the kingdom of heaven by re-
- 10 11. pentance and reformation. As to those cities which will not receive you, they must be left to the judgment of God; but let none go unwarned of the
12. danger of their state. In the offers of the gospel, they have had advantages which Sodom never had; and if they reject them, must expect a severer treat-
13. 14. 15. ment. Such are the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. They have rejected offers which

probable, that he himself was one of them. They seem to be an imitation of the seventy elders (mentioned Numb. xi. 16.); as the twelve apostles were of the heads, or leaders of the twelve tribes.

4. *Salute no man*, is only a phrase equivalent to *suffer nothing to retard you*. The expression seems to be an imitation of the prophet Elisha's instruction to Gehazi, 2 Kings, iv. 29.

6. *Son of peace*. It is a common Jewish phrase to style a man the son of any good or bad quality he possesses. The *children of wrath*, the *son of perdition*, are similar phrases.

11. See a note on Matt. x. 14.

might

might have converted heathen cities; and shall find, that such impenitent hardness of heart, and obstinate opposition to the gospel, shall subject them to a severe account. He who rejects you, rejects me; and he who rejects me, rejects the Father who sent me. 16.

With this charge the disciples were dismissed; and executed their commission with great success. On their return to their master, they expressed their joy, on having been enabled, through his name, to cast out devils. Jesus assured them, that the power of the devil should more and more be abridged; and that they should more and more be strengthened against all their enemies. Be not, however, added he, so much rejoiced that evil spirits are subject unto 17. 18. 19. 20.

17. As our Saviour had set out on his journey to Jerusalem when he dismissed the seventy disciples, we must suppose, in order to make the evangelist consistent, that he went by very easy, and perhaps not by direct stages, preaching in all the towns and villages as he went. But as St. Luke is not very exact in his chronology, these circumstances might perhaps have attended one of those former journeys to Jerusalem of which St. John speaks.

18. The expression in the original, *I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven*, is very grand and beautiful. It is a sublime idea; and the more so because of its obscurity. I have not retained the original expression, as the uniformity of my work requires these noble flights of eastern sublimity to be simply explained.

19. This expression, *I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions*, does not at all, I think, relate to the power of working miracles; but is a bold, figurative manner of expressing, that their safety should be God's peculiar care. Thus David, speaking of the security of a good man, says (Ps. xci. 13.) *Thou shalt go upon the lion and adder: the young lion and dragon shalt thou tread under thy feet*.

20. *Rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven*. This expression is commonly brought in proof of absolute, unconditional election. But it seems absurd to prove a doctrine by a figurative expression; the natural meaning too of which is so obvious to common sense.

you —

you — especially let not ideas of this kind lead you to any thoughts of self-exaltation; but let your great joy and comfort arise from that holy faith and obedience to God, which will secure to you the blessed

21. hope of everlasting life. — Then Jesus, breaking out into a pathetic prayer, thanked God for laying open the great truths of the gospel, not only to the wise and learned, but to the very lowest and simplest

22. of mankind. — He then turned to his disciples, and told them, that the entire dispensation of the gospel was committed to him — that the great scheme of it was inscrutable to man — that no part of it was of human institution — but the whole was a revelation

23. from God. And be you greatly thankful, said he,

24. to your heavenly Father, for giving you a knowledge of these things, which patriarchs and prophets have wished to know, but could see only at a distance in shadowy representations,

25. About this time a Scribe came to Jesus, and asked him, with an insidious design, what he should do to

26. inherit eternal life? — Jesus referred him to the

22. Such passages as these, I think, should abate much of that prying curiosity of men, which endeavours to scrutinise the depths of divine truth. Whatever may be the precise meaning of the words, *No man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father*, they must, I think, at least be conceived to convey some deep mysterious truth. Those parts of the great covenant of grace which relate to *God Almighty* are, no doubt, incomprehensible to us. Those parts which relate to *us* — which regulate our faith and practice, are sufficiently plain. God has, in short, given us sufficient evidence to believe in the gospel; and on that evidence we must exercise our faith in believing some truths which we cannot understand.

law;

law; asking him, What he there found on that head?
 — The Scribe answered, he was there taught to
 love God with all his heart, and his neighbour as
 himself. — Jesus told him, if he could do that, he
 wanted nothing else to secure his salvation. — But
 here a difficulty occurred to the inquirer. He knew
 the circumscribed bounds of neighbourhood, among
 the Jews especially, who would allow no rites of
 hospitality to their near neighbours, the Samaritans.
 Being willing, therefore, to justify his own practice,
 he asked Jesus, whom he should call his neighbour?
 — Jesus, instead of convincing him by argument,
 that all mankind, even Samaritans, were to be
 esteemed his *neighbours*, obliged him, by laying an
 apposite case before him, to convince himself. —
 A Jew, said he, on a journey from Jerusalem to
 Jericho, fell among thieves, who, treating him with
 great cruelty, left him on the road almost expiring.
 It happened, that a priest coming that way, just
 looked on him; but went on without the least en-
 deavour to relieve him. A Levite, soon after, acted
 the same unfriendly part. But a Samaritan, passing
 that road, and seeing the Jew in distress, immedi-
 ately

27.

28.

29.

30.

31.

32.

33.

34- 35.

28. The *impossibility* of doing this — that is, of *keeping the whole law*. — was what made a Saviour necessary.

30. The scene is laid on this road with great propriety, as it ran through a desert; which, from being infested by banditti, was called, as Jerom tells us, *the bloody way*. Jerusalem standing high, and Jericho being seated in a valley, it was properly said *going down* to it.

34. Oil and wine are to this day, under the name of the *scriptural balsam*, applied to green wounds.

35. *He took out two pence*, which is about fifteen pence of our money,

- ately gave him the best relief he could on the spot; and setting him on his own beast, carried him to a place of security, where he took all the care of him in his power. Which now of these three, said Jesus to the Scribe, was neighbour to him who fell among thieves? — He certainly, replied the Scribe, who relieved him. — Jesus, by thus making him acknowledge the propriety of a Samaritan's acting as a neighbour to a Jew, made him, in effect, acknowledge also the propriety of a Jew's acting as a neighbour to a Samaritan; and dismissed him with an injunction to copy the example.
36. 38. 39. 40. Jesus still continuing his journey towards Jerusalem, called for refreshment at the house of two sisters, Martha and Mary. Both of them were pious women, and both were desirous to shew their respect for him; but in different ways. Martha was solicitous about providing the best entertainment in her power. Mary sat at his feet, listening to his divine instructions. At this indifference about household matters, Martha taking offence, begged Jesus to order Mary to her assistance. — Jesus replied,
41. 42.

money, and would in that country go about as far as three or four shillings with us; being equivalent to the price of two days labour.

40. The word in the original, *πρωσπορω*, is very expressive; signifying, to be *drawn different ways at the same time*: as if she wished to attend to Jesus; but thought the business of the house more necessary.

40. The word *συναντιλαβηται* signifies literally *to help together with*; and is the very word chosen by St. Paul to express the assistance of the Holy Spirit. Rom. viii. 26.

41. It is astonishing, that Theophylact, and other interpreters after him, (Bp. Pearce in particular,) should explain this noble passage as if alluding to *one dish of meat*.

Martha,

Martha, Martha, thou art careful, and perplexed about needless things: one great business only can be called truly necessary; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken from her.

On another occasion, as Jesus had been praying, his disciples begged him to instruct them in the duty of prayer, as John had instructed his disciples. — Jesus gave them the following prayer as the model of their prayers in general.

CHAP.
XI.

Heavenly Father, grant that all mankind may have just notions of thee — that they may receive thy holy religion — and live in obedience to thy will, as the blessed angels do in heaven. With regard to temporal things, grant us the necessities of life. With regard to spiritual things, forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who have trespassed against us; assist us with thy grace in getting the better of temptation; and deliver us from evil.

Jesus having thus taught them how to pray; taught them next the duty of perseverance in prayer. If any of you, said he, should go at midnight to a friend, and desire him to rise and supply you with provision for a guest, who had unexpectedly arrived; though your friend might hesitate at first, from the

6. The idea of a *guest in the night*, was more common in those countries (where people often travelled at that season to avoid the heat) than it is with us.

7. The words in the original are capable of being translated, *My servants, (or family,) together with myself, are all in bed.*

8. unseasonableness of the hour, yet, on your persisting in the request, he might at length, through your importunity, be induced to rise and give you what you wanted. Be you then ardent and sincere in your petitions to your heavenly Father, and, if proper, 9. 10. they shall assuredly be granted. Would any of you, 11. 12. if his son should ask him a reasonable request, give him something detrimental? If weak men therefore attend to the petitions of their children, can you suppose that your heavenly Father will do less?

14. About this time Jesus having cast out a devil from a dumb man, immediately healed him, and restored him to the use of his speech, — On this great miracle the people shewed him every mark of respect. But the Scribes and Pharisees became the more violent against him; informing the people, that he cast out devils merely through a *confederacy with them*. — Others again pretending to be dissatisfied with the miracles he had wrought *on earth*, which appeared to be no evidence of his divine commission, demanded a sign *from heaven*.

17. To all this malice Jesus replied, that, in every government, an opposition among the members is fatal. If my doctrines, said he, lead one way, and the temptations of the devil another, how is it possible there can be any confederacy between us?

12. *If he ask an egg, will he give him a scorpion?* The body of a scorpion is not unlike an egg; so that the same *similitude* is carried on between the *thing asked* and the *thing given*.

— Besides,

— Besides, said Jesus, if I cast out devils through
 a confederacy with evil spirits, by what means do
 your own party cast them out? You will not sup-
 pose them to league with devils. Allow me, there-
 fore, only the same credit you allow them. — If
 then you allow that I cast out devils by the power
 of God; you must allow also, that every thing I
 say and teach is of divine authority. When one
 man overcometh another, and taketh from him his
 strong holds, you know assuredly which of the two
 is superior. So that, as you see me successfully op-
 pose the works of the devil, I may well consider
 him, who is not with me, to be most *maliciously bent*
 against me: and he must take that consequence
 which he draws upon himself. — Let not your
 wicked hearts therefore harden you beyond repent-
 ance. When an evil spirit has left a man, and find-
 ing no resting place, returns to him again with new
 force, the last state of such a person is worse than the
 first. Take care therefore, lest you Jews, who have
 been delivered from *heathen ignorance* by the law of
 Moses, may not place yourselves in a still *worse state*
 by rejecting the gospel.

As Jesus was thus speaking, a woman from the
 crowd, struck with admiration at the wisdom and au-

19. See a note on Matt. xii. 26.

26. See a note on Matt. xii. 43.

27. Such expressions as *the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked*, were often referred by the Jews to the Messiah. They are frequently mentioned in the Talmudic writings.

thority of his discourse, cried out, Blessed is the mother that bare you, and the breast that you have suckled. 28. Jesus, who took every occasion of giving instruction, said, Blessed rather are they who hear the word of God, and keep it.

29. Jesus having thus answered the malice of those who ascribed his miracles to a confederacy with devils, answered those next who demanded a sign from heaven. — This obstinate generation, said he, seeketh a sign; but no sign shall be given them, except the 30. sign of the prophet Jonas. As his lying three days in the whale's belly, and afterwards presenting himself alive, was a proof to the Ninevites of his divine authority; such proof hereafter shall the son of man give to this generation; and they who reject this 31. last sign shall be among the most inexcusable of all sinners. The queen of Sheba shall rise in judgment against them. She came from a distant country to hear the wisdom of Solomon, while they 32. neglect a greater than Solomon at their very doors. The Ninevites also shall rise in judgment against them; for they repented at the preaching of Jonas, though Jonas was only the type of him whom they reject. 33. They pretend indeed to great holiness; but if their hearts were really impressed with it, they would shew

29. See verse 16.

33. There is some difficulty in the connection of this verse. The same words are applied by St. Matthew to the disciples, which

shew it in its effects. As the eye guides the body, 34.
 so does a sincere heart the affections. If sincerity
 be wanting, the whole is darkness. Take care, there- 35.
 fore, lest the light of your minds become darkness.
 If the mind be religious, a devout practice will 36.
 follow.

After Jesus had done teaching the people, one of 37.
 the Pharisees invited him to dine; but was much 38.
 surprised at seeing him sit down, before he washed
 his hands. — With vain scruples, said Jesus, do you 39.
 Pharisees cleanse your hands; while you leave your
 hearts impure. Whereas it is the heart chiefly 40.
 which God regards. On it lay the stress; and fear 41.
 not the wrath of God for eating with unwashed
 hands. The outward observances of religion are 42.
 greatly inferior to its moral precepts. Slight not
 the ceremony; but revere the duty. These hypo- 43.
 critical pretences of the Scribes and Pharisees to
 more than usual holiness cover the wickedness of their
 hearts; and like pits, which appear not, destroy the 44.
 unwary.

In the latter part of this discourse, Jesus having 45.
 mentioned the Scribes also with the Pharisees, a
 Scribe in the company observed, that his censures
 had involved them also. — Jesus answered, He 46.47.48.

which are here applied to the Pharisees. But the expression is
 without doubt proverbial; and therefore may admit of different
 applications. I have followed the interpretation of Dr. Clarke.

34. The *evil eye*, or *single eye*, were common expressions among
 the Jews, to denote good or bad qualities in the mind.

39. See a note on Matt. xxiii. 25.

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meant

49-50. 51. meant it should. How severe, said he, are you also
52. in your impositions on others! How reluctant to bear the least burden yourselves! You take away the key of knowledge from them; without applying it to any use of your own. You build sepulchres indeed to the memory of the prophets, whom your fathers put to death: but in doing this, you only shew yourselves their children, and that you mean to imitate their example. Holy prophets and apostles shall be sent among *you*, as were among *your fathers*; and you will treat them with the cruelty of your fathers: that the blood of all the holy prophets, that hath been shed from the beginning of time, may justify that signal vengeance, which shall shortly come upon this wicked generation.

As Jesus continued to speak, the Scribes and Pharisees began to urge him with questions, and endeavour, if possible, to provoke him to say something, from which they might form an accusation.

- CHAP. XII. Some time after, a great number of people collecting about Jesus, he took the opportunity of instructing both his disciples and his hearers in general. — Above all things, said he, avoid hypocritical pretences in religion. I have always set the truth before

49. *Therefore also said the wisdom of God.* Many interpreters are of opinion, that our Saviour quotes this account of the cruelty of the Jews to the prophets from some book intituled the *Wisdom of God*.

2. 3. These two verses in the original carry the air of a prudential reason against hypocrisy: as if our Saviour had said, *It is*

before you: be you as sincere in communicating it to others. Those doctrines, which you have heard from me in private, preach you to all the world. And be under no apprehensions from the malice and prejudices of men. These injuries reach only the body. But live under a constant sense of that great Being, whose power reaches the soul. That gracious Providence, which sustains even the smallest part of his vast creation, will not certainly neglect you. — But even if God should suffer you to fall under the malice of your enemies, (as in the cause of religion may be the case,) yet still persevere. Consider the reward of suffering for the truth, and the danger of denying it. The highest crime of this kind, into which the wickedness of man's heart can lead him, is that (into which the Pharisees have fallen) of ascribing my miracles to the devil. It is a wickedness of the most dangerous kind; as, in a manner, it prevents repentance, by hardening the heart against the last great means of conviction. — I conclude my instruction on this head, by warning you, when you are brought before your enemies, not to be foli-

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6. 7.

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11. 12.

is certainly wiser in you, on worldly motives, not to be hypocritical; because sooner or later you shall be discovered. But I cannot conceive this to be the real sense of the passage: both because urging worldly principles against such a vice is a degrading argument; and also because the parallel place in St. Matthew (x. 26.) gives a different sense, which sense I have adopted. — Instead of ελαλησατε ye have spoken, it is probable St. Luke wrote ελαλησα I have spoken.

7. *But even.* It is probable that ΑΑΑΑ, which is written in capitals commonly in MSS. was inserted for ΑΜΑ, which it so nearly resembles; and then we should have the better sense of *Then even.*

citous what you shall say; but to rest assured, that God, in those times of necessity, will communicate to you a proper defence, through the influence of his Holy Spirit.

13. While Jesus was thus speaking, a person from the crowd desired him to settle a difference between him
 14. and his brother. — Jesus telling him that an affair
 15. of that kind did not at all belong to him, took an occasion, from this circumstance, to caution his hearers against covetousness, and exhort them to a dependence on God. — A certain man, said he, found the increase of his goods beyond his hopes; and not knowing where to bestow his abundance, he at length determined to enlarge his store-houses.
 16. After he should thus have completed all his schemes,
 17. he resolved to give a loose to the pleasures of life,
 18. and fully enjoy the possessions he had gained. But now observe the event. That very night, as he was laying these plans of happiness, his soul was required. Whose were then the goods which he
 19. thought he had secured? — Such is the folly of that man, who is rich in worldly possessions, but has made
 20. no provision for everlasting happiness. — Be not, therefore, solicitous about these worldly matters. Your *life* is a pledge from God, that he will provide
 21. for the *necessities* of it. That gracious power, which
 22. 23. feeds the ravens without their care, and clothes the lilies without their toil, will assuredly reach out the same protection to you. — Besides, what folly does such solicitude discover? With all your anxiety,
 24. 25. 26. you
 27. 28.

you cannot add one moment to your lives. Why should you therefore, be distressed about other things, still as little in your power? Leave, then, 29.30.31. these intruding cares, to worldly men, and seek you the kingdom of God. Your heavenly Father knoweth you have need of these temporal things, and in his own manner will bestow them. — Neither be 32. shaken with the terrors of this life; but oppose them by reflecting on the glories of the next. It is your heavenly Father's pleasure to bestow everlasting happiness on you. Sit loose then to all the things of 33. this world. Communicate its blessings, if you have them, to those who want them. Provide yourselves bags which never decay: and lay up treasures in heaven, which nothing can injure. Of one thing 34. be well assured, that wherever your treasure is, there will your hearts be also. — Thus laying aside 35.36.37. anxiety for the things of this world, be always prepared for the next; that, at whatever hour your Lord may call, he may find you ready, and reward

32. *It is your father's good pleasure.* The word *ευδοκῆσαι* signifies a *pleasurable acquiescence*. The idea of God's enjoying, or *resting*, as it were, in the enjoyment of the happiness he produces, is often touched in Scripture: and many passages which are made to furnish only matter of controversy about election and predestination, might furnish the pious heart with tender and amiable ideas of the Deity.

35. *Let your loins be girt.* The inhabitants of eastern countries wore long garments, and used to tuck them up when they prepared for action: to this the text alludes. Horace gives us the same idea,

— *veluti fuccinctus cursitat hospes.*

38. *Second and third watch*, that is, in the dead of night. Men went to bed about the *first* watch, and rose in the *fourth*.

- your vigilance. The uncertainty of your master's coming is sufficient ground for constant preparation.
39. If the hour in which the thief should come, were known, the house might easily be guarded; but
40. *constant* vigilance is required. — Be you, likewise, always ready; for the hour of your death is always uncertain.
41. Peter, on his master's making a pause, desirous of knowing, whether these precepts were of *general use*, or to be applied chiefly to the disciples, put
42. the question to him. — Certainly, said Jesus, they are meant as instruction for all. Every man should be that faithful steward, whom his Lord appoints
43. 44. to manage his affairs. Happy and eminently rewarded shall that servant be, who shall be found
45. attentive to the discharge of his duty. But if he shall build upon his Lord's delay, and behave with
46. insolence and oppression, his Lord may come suddenly upon him, cut him off in the midst of his wickedness, and give him up to that punishment
47. 48. which he so well deserves. The offence, however, will always be in proportion to the knowledge. The more informed the servant is of his master's will, the greater shall be his punishment if he neglect it. — But still of this be assured, that you shall
49. find the discharge of your duty accompanied with
diffi-

46. See a note on *cutting asunder*, St. Matt. xxiv. 51.

49. *What will I, if it be already kindled?* — Some put an interrogation after *ἴδω*, and read it thus: *What will I? O that it were already kindled!* considering it as a necessary part of the gospel

difficulties and trials. Peaceful and gentle as the gospel is, it will excite great persecutions against it, which are, indeed, already begun. I myself must be the first sacrifice. The circumstances of this great event are now approaching. After that, you must expect to see many scenes of cruelty and distress; inasmuch that men will break through, not only all the duties of humanity, but all the ties of natural affection.

Then turning to the people, If you would attend, said he, you may as easily see the prophetic signs of these approaching events, as you can judge of the weather from the appearance of the sky. — And when you do see them, your interest surely makes it highly necessary to take warning from them. What person at enmity with a powerful neighbour would not wish, before things are carried to extremity, to avert those consequences which he cannot but know are coming upon him?

It happened, about this time, that some Galileans having given great offence to Pontius Pilate, the

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gospel institution. See Bowyer's Conject. — Others say, *what will I*, is only a Jewish mode of speaking for *I will*. See Lightfoot's Heb. and Tal. Ex. in locum.

55. The heat here mentioned is probably in allusion to the hot winds which often blow in those countries from the south.

56. These signs are not called *prophetic* in the original; but *prophetic signs* are the only signs which our Saviour, I think, could mean.

1. The offence which those people gave to Pilate is supposed to have been their spreading among the people that they were free, and ought not to pay tribute to any foreign power: after the example of Judas of Galilee, who was the author of these rebellious opinions.

Roman governor, he had taken a severe revenge; and had fallen on them with a body of troops, in the midst of a solemn sacrifice. The affair made much noise; and some people mentioned it to Jesus, as the effects of a divine judgment. — But Jesus rebuked their forwardness, and bad them not to be so ready to point out the judgments of heaven from such events as this they had mentioned, nor from any accidental mischief, such as the fall of the tower of Siloam, which had killed eighteen people. The light, said he, in which you should consider these things, is that of being warnings to yourselves. Unless you repent, be assured, that a greater destruction than either of these shall fall upon you.

To impress this idea the more strongly, he spake the following parable. — A person who had a barren fig-tree in his vineyard, bad his gardener cut it down, as he had been long disappointed in his expectation of its bearing fruit. But the gardener, with great

5. Many writers have remarked, that on looking into the events of the Jewish wars, some remarkable calamities befel the Jews very similar to these. A great body of them were slain as they were assembled at a sacrifice. See Bell. Jud. vi. c. 9. and vii. c. 17. and many of them also perished under the ruins of the temple, vi. c. 4. vii. c. 10., &c.

7. Some interpreters, who seek a hidden meaning in *every word* of scripture, suppose the *three years* here mentioned refer to the three years of our Saviour's preaching. I rather suppose them an indefinite number: as when we say *two* or *three*, we mean not to confine ourselves exactly to these numbers, but only to a small one.

8. God is the owner of the garden: his prophets and apostles are represented by the gardener; and the Jewish nation, by the fig-tree. According to the tenor of the parable, God and his prophets

great importunity, begged him to defer his resolution one year more. I will dig about it, said he, and dung it; and if that culture produces no effect, there can be no farther hope of its improvement; and I will cut it down.

It happened, some time after, that as Jesus was teaching in a synagogue on the sabbath, a woman was there, who, through a violent contraction of her limbs, was bowed, as it were, together. Jesus, calling her to him, immediately healed her; inso-much that, instantly raising herself up, she praised God for his mercy before all the assembly. — The ruler of the synagogue, who was a strict Pharisee, observing this, turned to the people, and in a tone of indignation told them, There were six days in which men might work; on them, therefore, they ought to come and be healed, and not on the sabbath-day. — Jesus, not choosing that such hypocrisy should pass uncensured, asked the ruler of the synagogue, Whether he should scruple to loose his ox or his ass from a stall on the sabbath, and lead him to water? — And would you be more scrupulous, said he, in loosing a fellow-creature from

prophets are introduced as holding different sentiments. But in our Saviour's parables only the grand scope is to be attended to; which, in this parable is, that the fig-tree should certainly be cut down if it continued unfruitful.

16. *Whom Satan hath bound, &c.* From this, and some other passages, as 1 Cor. v. 5. and in the case of Job, it appears as if the devil had at that time the power of inflicting diseases, as well as of possessions; and hence the phrase perhaps of *delivering over to Satan*.

- the bond of an infirmity, which had so long oppressed her? — The case, put in so strong a manner, confounded the ruler of the synagogue; while the common people, who considered Jesus's actions with unprejudiced minds, listened to his doctrine with attention, and praised God for the wonderful works which he had performed. — Jesus, foreseeing that the gospel should finally prevail over all the opposition and prejudices of men, added, in the spirit of prophecy, that it was like a grain of mustard-seed; which, said he, is the least of all seeds; but when it has taken root, it becomes the greatest of plants. In this light, continued he, it is like leaven also, which, being hid in a quantity of meal, makes no appearance at first; but will soon begin to ferment, and spread over the whole.
22. Jesus was still proceeding towards Jerusalem, by slow stages, and preaching in the towns and villages through which he passed. — It happened, during his journey, that a person, with an indiscreet curiosity, inquired of him, whether the number of those who should be saved was not proportionally very small?
23. — Such questions never meet with a direct answer. However few they may be, said Jesus, do you strive to be among them. And of one thing be assured, that it is not an inactive wish, but a serious endeavour, that will gain that end. A time of mercy is now offered: but if you obstinately reject it, the door may be shut against you. Many may be the excuses and pretences, at that awful time: but nothing

thing will abide the test, but a holy and religious life. As for your claims from Abraham, they will be of no avail. You shall see that patriarch and his pious descendants admitted to God's favour; and yourselves, if you continue impenitent, thrust out. Nay, you shall see God's favour transferred from you to the Gentiles; while you are rejected, you shall see them received, whose pretensions you have always treated with contempt.

About this time, some of the Pharisees, envying the credit of Jesus, and desirous of removing him from the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, told him, that Herod had formed a design to put him to death. — Tell that crafty prince, said Jesus, that he can neither hasten nor delay the great work in which I am engaged. I pursue my journey to Jerusalem. It is impossible that a prophet should perish in any other place. — Then breaking out into a tender exclamation, he lamented the fate of that unhappy city, stained with the blood of so many prophets. In vain, said he, hath God extended his mercy to it — that mercy hath been rejected. The period is approaching when a wonderful desolation shall come upon it; which will, at the same time, be a full evidence of the truth of the Messiah's kingdom.

The offence which Jesus had lately given, by healing a woman on the sabbath, he gave again on the following occasion. — He had been invited, on that day, to dine with a Pharisee, who, with others at table,

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table, had their eyes upon him, as Jesus was aware.
 2. It happened, (as, wherever he went, he was attended
 3. by some in distress,) a man in a dropsy presented
 himself. On seeing him, Jesus turned to the Phari-
 4. sees, and asked them, Whether they thought it law-
 ful to heal him on the sabbath day? — To this
 5. question no answer was given; and Jesus healed the
 man. Then turning again to the Pharisees, he asked,
 as he had done before, Whether, if any of them
 should hear his beast had fallen into a pit, he would
 not immediately relieve him, though it should hap-
 6. pen to be on the sabbath? — This question, like
 7. the other, was not answered. — At the same time,
 Jesus observing with what zeal and eagerness the
 several guests endeavoured to get the best seats, took
 8. this opportunity to inculcate humility. When a man
 is invited, said he, to an entertainment, it is highly
 9. improper to place himself in the best seat; for if a
 person of more dignity should arrive, he must then,
 10. with disgrace, give way. On the other hand, if

5. An ass and an ox are often put in scripture for every kind of animal. As in the tenth commandment; and in *Is. i. 3.*

8 Among heaps of absurdity, we sometimes find a good passage in the traditionary writings of the Jews. The following is very similar to our Saviour's illustration in these verses. "*Three men were bidden by a king to a feast — a prince, a wise man, and a humble man. The prince sat highest; the wise man next, and the humble man lowest. The king asked the prince, Why sittest thou highest? He said, Because I am a prince. He then asked the wise man, Why sittest thou next? He said, Because I am a wise man. Then he asked the humble man, Why sittest thou lowest? He said, Because I am humble. The king seated the humble man highest, and the prince lowest.*" *Lightfoot, vol. i. p. 247.*

at

at first, he had taken a lower place, the master of the entertainment coming in, and leading him up higher, would do him credit before the company. Prudence, 11. said Jesus, will dictate sentiments of this kind to you in *worldly matters*; let it be your part to change them into *religious principles*: for God will always reward humility with exaltation. — Jesus then taking 12.13.14. occasion from the entertainment he had just received, gave his hearers a lesson on charity also, as well as humility. The common mode, said he, of making entertainments in this world, where you invite each other, that you may be invited again, differs from gospel-charity. The truly charitable man lays aside all thoughts of worldly recompence; and assists his necessitous neighbours merely for the love of God, and his gracious promises.

A person in the company, pleased with these instructions, expressed aloud his sense of the happiness of those who lived under the influence of the gospel. 15. — Jesus, closing with the sentiment, shewed, under 16. the following parable, how very undeserving the Jews therefore were, in refusing its gracious offers; and how justly they should be rejected in favour of the Gentiles. — A rich man, said he, made a great feast, to which he invited his particular friends. But they, instead of attending, when called, absented themselves on trifling excuses. The master of the 17.18.19.

20. It may be observed, that all these excuses are on *lawful occasions*; which shews the irreligion of attending too much *even to necessary things*.

20.21.22. feast, displeased at this neglect, sent out his servants,
23.24. and in the room of those unworthy guests, whom he had first invited, filled his table with those whom they accidentally found in the high-roads and places of public resort.

25. As Jesus left the Pharisee's house, he was met by
26. a great crowd of people, whom he instructed in the nature of the gospel-dispensation. He who wishes to be my disciple, said he, must not expect a life of ease and luxury. If the advantages of the world, or if his natural affections, should interfere with his
27. religion, he must give them up, and be prepared to suffer every thing, which a conscientious discharge
28.29.30. of his duty may bring upon him. And let these great points be well weighed and considered. In worldly matters, you are all ready enough, especially if it be an affair of consequence, to weigh well the

23. The papists, and others of a persecuting disposition, are hard put to it for arguments to defend their cause, when they use the words of this text, *compel them to come in*, as a principal one. The word in the original is *αναγκάζω*; but the context seems to construe it into no idea but that of *persuading* them to come in; and, except Acts, xxvi. 11. I believe no passage in the New Testament can be produced in which it has a compulsory meaning. The word bears the sense also of *persuasive compulsion* in the best Attic writers. But if it even *had* a compulsory meaning, we are not surely to take a practice so contrary to the spirit of the gospel from a mere expression in a parable.

26. The expression in the original, *If a man hate not his father and mother*, though it sound harshly in our ears, was well understood by those who were used to such figurative diction. — It is supposed our Saviour alludes here to that public renunciation which the Jewish proselyte was obliged to make of all his Gentile relations. The passage is explained by the parallel place, Matt. x. 37.

expence

expence and trouble, as well as your own abilities, before you engage in it. No man would begin to build a house without considering whether he were able to finish it. No king would go to war till he had weighed his own strength and that of the enemy. Let it be your business, therefore, to weigh well what you engage in, before you profess yourselves my disciples. Salt is good: but if it have not the flavour of salt, it is of no value. — Attend carefully to what I say; and let it have its due influence on your minds.

31. 32.

33.

34. 35.

These divine discourses were heard by the common people with great attention; and many persons, even of wicked lives, were wrought on to follow Jesus, and become his hearers. — This again gave great offence to the Scribes and Pharisees. What holiness, they would say, can there be in a person who keeps company with men of such scandalous characters? — Is there one among you, said Jesus, who, having lost a single sheep out of a hundred, would not leave the ninety and nine, and go in quest of that which had strayed? And if he should find it, would he not receive a more sensible pleasure at the recovery of that which had been lost, than at the safety of all the rest? — Or suppose a person possessed of ten pieces of money, should lose one piece,

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3. 4. 5. 6.

7. 8. 9. 10.

4. It should be translated, *Doth not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the wilderness, &c.* if the original will suffer the transposition.

with

with what anxiety would he seek that one piece; and what pleasure would he feel from the recovery of it? — If then, said Jesus, we are so affected by the trifling things of this world, how ought we to be affected by the recovery of a sinner to happiness? This is a fight which your heavenly Father looks on with pleasure.

11. From the recovery of particular sinners, Jesus enlarging the idea, considered the recovery of whole nations; and represented, in the following parable, the different circumstances of Jews and Gentiles — the acceptance of the latter, and the unreasonableness of the former, in wishing to withhold their privileges from others. — A certain man, said he, had two sons; the younger of whom, tired of the restraint of a well-ordered family, begged his father to give him at once his inheritance, and leave him to himself. Having obtained his request, he set out directly in search of happiness, on a long journey. Riot and prodigality attended all his steps; and beggary and distress soon followed. To supply the necessities of nature, he was at length obliged to submit to the most servile employments. But his misery still increasing, he came at length to a resolution to return to his father, and try, if possible, to regain his affections. With the deepest humility,

12.13.14.
15.16.17.
18.19.20.
21.22.23.
24.25.26.
27.28.29.
30.31.32.

15. As the Jews held swine to be unclean animals, our Saviour's sending the prodigal to feed them, shews in a strong light his abject condition.

there-

therefore, and contrition, he returned, almost in the agony of despair. But his father, seeing him at a distance, ran to meet him; and throwing his arms around his neck, received him with unbounded tenderness, and carrying him home, spent the remainder of the day in rejoicing.——The elder brother, in the mean time, was in the fields: but returning in the evening, was surprised, as he approached the house, to hear the sound of music and festivity. Calling therefore one of the servants, he inquired the cause; and being informed that his brother had returned safe, and that his father had on that account made a day of rejoicing, he was highly displeased, and refused to go in. His father condescended even to intreat him: but he was received with reproaches. I, who have served you, said the haughty youth, all my life with fidelity, never received the least token of any particular attention. But when your prodigal son returns, after consuming all that he had in riot, nothing is thought too good for him.——To all this impropriety of language the father tenderly replied, Son, you are ever with me, and have partaken always of my kindness. Be satisfied therefore, and be not offended at my receiving with affection your lost brother, who is restored to me by contrition, penitence, and resolutions of obedience †.

† I have given the *substance* of the parable: but the *beautiful simplicity* of the original can be given in no words but its own. The change of person in the thirtieth verse, *this thy son*, into *this thy brother*, in the thirty-second, is particularly tender.

CHAP.
XVI.

1. 2. On another occasion Jesus shewed his hearers by the following parable, that the things of this world have no use but that of being subservient to a better. — A rich man, said he, had a steward, who, being accused of dishonesty, was on the point of being dismissed. Under this disagreeable circumstance he began to consider what he should do. He could not bear a life of labour, and could not submit to live on alms. After some hesitation, he resolved at last to make an advantage of his stewardship before he left it; and to provide for an evil day by making 5. 6. 7. friends of his Lord's debtors. Collecting them together therefore, he examined their several accounts, 8. and deducted a part from each. Jesus then pointed out the management of worldly men, as an example of attention to his followers in their spiritual affairs: 9. 10. adding, at the same time, an exhortation to make the things of this world subservient to their everlasting happiness; assuring them, that if they did not use temporal blessings as they ought, they could never be qualified to receive spiritual blessings. 11. If therefore, added Jesus, you do not first wean your affections from the love of worldly things, you can

1. It is evident from v. 14. that the Pharisees were still among his hearers; and indeed such a discourse as this seemed more adapted to them than to his immediate disciples, who had not much of this world's goods to dispose of; though, in fact, we are stewards, not only of riches, but of time, health, strength, leisure, opportunities, parts, knowledge, in short, of every thing we enjoy.

11. The idea, in a *mortal state*, of calling nothing *our own*, is often illustrated by heathen writers.

— Nimium

can never be prepared for heavenly : and if in the
 use of these transitory possessions you have been
 found deficient, you shall never receive those ever-
 lasting rewards, which should otherwise have been
 your inheritance. For it is as impossible to surrender
 our affections, at the same time, to this world and
 the next, as it is to serve two masters of opposite
 dispositions.

These things were said in the hearing of the Pha-
 risees, who being covetous, and wholly indisposed
 to such doctrines, endeavoured to turn them into ridi-
 cule. — But Jesus thus rebuked them : That
 strict observance, said he, of the ceremonies of the
 law, of which you boast, may give you credit among
 men ; but God knoweth your hearts. Wickedness,
 under whatever sanctified appearance, is his abhor-
 rence. From the time of John's preaching, the
 gospel is offered universally to all mankind ; and the
 types and ceremonies of the law are, at the same
 time, fulfilled and abolished. The morality also of the
 law is heightened and improved ; and what Moses

— Nimium vobis Romanâ propago
 Vifa potens, superi, propria hæc si dona fuissent.

Æn. vi. ver. 870.

Nihil esse proprium cuiquam.

TER. AND. AC. iv.

— Propriæ telluris herum natura, neque illum
 Nec me, nec quenquam statuit —

HOR. SAT. lib. ii.

12. *In that which is another man's* — namely, in that which is of
 uncertain possession, and may be taken from you.

16. Some translate Πας υς αυτης βιαζεται : *Every one useth violence
 against it.*

allowed, (as in the case of divorce, for instance,) for the hardness of your hearts, is now brought within a much stricter and more refined law.

19. Jesus having thus rebuked the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, returned to the subject which they had interrupted; and, in the following parable, shewed them the dreadful consequences of a voluptuous life, given up wholly to the pleasures of this world. The parable also tended to shew the comparative happiness of good men, though in the midst of worldly distress. — A certain rich man, said he, enjoyed all the happiness and pleasures of this life. His dress was the most costly, and his table the most sumptuous.
20. In the mean time, a beggar, whose name was Lazarus, lay at his gate, struggling with all the necessities of nature; and wishing in vain to supply his hunger from the offals of the plentiful table within.
21. To hunger was added the calamity of disease. —
22. In process of time the beggar died; and was carried by angels into a state of happiness. Soon after, the rich man also died: but while his body was deposited in the grave in all the splendor of funeral pomp, his soul was conveyed into a place of torment. From hence casting up his eyes, he saw Abraham afar off, in the regions of happiness, and Lazarus by his side.
23. With a lamentable cry he begged for mercy;
24. requesting that Lazarus might be sent to dip the

23. This was accommodated to a common opinion among the Jews, that Paradise and Gehenna were so situated, that it was easy to see from one into the other.

tip of his finger only in water, and cool his tongue; for he was tormented in the midst of flames. But Abraham put him in mind of the voluptuous life he had led upon earth, and of the little use he had made of the blessings with which Providence had intrusted him. — He put him in mind also of the resignation with which Lazarus had borne his distressed circumstances; and shewed him, that their different situations after death were the consequences of their different lives upon earth. — He shewed him, lastly, the impossibility of any connection between those two different states, in which Lazarus and he were now placed. — Since that was impossible, the rich man next begged, that Abraham would send Lazarus to warn his brethren against following his bad example. Abraham told him, they had Moses and the prophets as constant monitors. — But he again urged, that if one went from the dead, they might repent. — To this Abraham finally answered, that God's ordinary means were fully sufficient for all mankind; and that if men were prejudiced and

31. This very beautiful parable is told with all the circumstances of eastern imagery. The soul carried to heaven by angels — the gulph between — Lazarus's lying in Abraham's bosom, are all Jewish images, and have great beauty in description. The last circumstance is illustrated by a passage from Josephus: *Θαυνοῦσας ἡμῖς Ἀβραάμ, καὶ Ἰσαακ, καὶ Ἰακώβ ἐκδοθήσονται εἰς τῆς κολπῆς αὐτῶν. Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, will receive us after death into their bosoms.* — The request to send a man from the dead is well explained by Bp. Sherlock, vol. iii. ser. 2. — Our Saviour perhaps pointed, in this conclusion to the infidelity of the Jews, after he himself had risen from the dead:

T 3

hardened

hardened in their sins, they would not even be converted by a man sent from the dead.

CHAP.
XVII.

1. 2. Jesus, on another occasion, instructing his disciples with regard to the great points of *giving* and *taking* offence, thus spoke. Such is the nature of human things, that the world must abound with offences of various kinds. Men will be deluded and drawn away by false opinions and wicked practices. But notwithstanding all these things must happen in the course of human affairs, yet that is no excuse for those wicked persons through whom they happen. He who seduces others to sin, shall have the most grievous of all sins to answer for himself. Consider, well, therefore, every action you do in this light; and be always fearful of corrupting the manners of others by any wicked practices of your own. — Again, as to *taking offence*, be not rigid in exacting all the satisfaction that may be due. Gently rebuke the offender; and if he make
4. a concession, immediately forgive him. However frequent his offences may be, yet, if his penitence continually follow them, let your heart be open to forgive,
5. On another occasion, the disciples begged Jesus to
6. increase their faith. — Jesus told them, it was a prayer which all Christians ought to make. Faith, said he, like a grain sown in the ground, should always be of an increasing nature; and such a faith may

may obtain any thing from the throne of grace.
 — Only of one thing be assured, that when you 7.8.9.10.
 have obtained this great Christian virtue, and all
 others, as far as you can, yet still you ought to
 have the most humble opinion of yourselves. When
 the servant does his duty shall his lord thank him?
 By no means. He has done *only* his duty. — So
 you, when you have attained what height of per-
 fection you can, must still say, we are unprofitable
 servants: we have done merely what was our duty
 to do.

Jesus, after this, proceeding in his journey to 11.
 Jerusalem, passed through Samaria and Galilee.
 As he approached a village in those parts, he met 12. 13.
 ten lepers, who were excluded from their place of
 abode, on account of their uncleanness †. These per-
 sons, knowing Jesus, stood at a distance, and begged,
 with a loud voice, that he would have mercy on
 them. Jesus bad them go and shew themselves to 14.
 the priest. As they went, they felt themselves healed.
 On this, one of them, who was a Samaritan, im- 15. 16.
 pressed with a sense of gratitude, returned to Jesus;
 and falling down at his feet, glorified his power and
 the goodness of God. Jesus inquiring after the
 other nine, and finding none had been awakened 17. 18.
 into a sense of gratitude but this single stranger,
 com-

† See the Levitical law.

18. *Thy faith hath made thee whole: σωωσι σε*; or rather, (as
 I have ventured to interpret it,) *thy faith hath put thee in the way*

19. commended his faith; and told him, it would lead him to a much higher salvation than the cure of a bodily disease.

20. 21. Some time after, the Pharisees asking Jesus, When the kingdom of the Messiah should come? he told them, it would never appear in the manner in which they expected it, with worldly pomp and ostentation. — The kingdom of the Messiah, said he, is established in the hearts of men.

22. Jesus took this opportunity to inform his disciples, that they must not hope to see a continuation of those peaceable days which they now enjoyed; but must
23. expect to meet with many calamities; and among
24. other difficulties, must guard against the delusions of
25. impostors. For though the gospel, said he, shall hereafter be propagated with surprising quickness; yet the Son of man must first suffer great indignity

of salvation. For, in the first place, the word *σωτηριαν* as often signifies to save from the effect of *sin*, as from any *other* danger. (See Matt. i. 21. and Luke vii. 50.) — And secondly, this leper was *already* cured of his *bodily disease*, as the others had been. So that one should suppose his faith was to save him from *something*, from which he had not *yet* been saved. The case seems to be this: the other nine had that faith in our Saviour's *power* which he seems to have required in all that were healed. But this man's faith seems to have been of a higher kind: such as acknowledged not only Jesus's *power*, but his being the *Messiah* also. — As the disciples had just been begging an increase of faith, this example comes in very properly to shew how it led from one degree to another — from the cure of a bodily disorder to everlasting happiness.

21. *Εξ υμων* may be translated *among you*, to which indeed I think we are rather led by the context: but the generality of commentators give it this more evangelical sense.

24. This verse is supposed by some to relate to the destruction of Jerusalem.

and

and cruelty from the Jews. Then shall come on 26. 27.
those calamitous times, which shall be as sudden
as they will be dreadful. As in the days of Noah,
men were thoroughly engaged in all the business of
life, till the flood unexpectedly destroyed them — and 28. 29.
as in the days of Lot, the inhabitants of Sodom
were unconcerned, till the great event came on —
so shall it be in that calamity which is hanging 30.
over the Jewish nation. Let every man, therefore, 31. 32.
remembering the case of Lot's wife, take the most
direct and speedy means of escape. — But prin- 33.
cipally, added Jesus, let this sudden escape carry
your thoughts still farther, to those similar events
of death and judgment, which shall be equally 34. 35.
unavoidable, and equally undistinguishing. A man's
loss and gain will not then be estimated on worldly
principles;

32 There were circumstances, no doubt, of disobedience, or of something worse than mere curiosity in the case of Lot's wife, which the brevity of the narrative leads us only to conjecture.

34. The passage from this verse seems more applicable to the general judgment, than to the siege of Jerusalem. Indeed most commentators interpret it in this sense (see the notes on Matt. xxiv. 31, and on Mark xiii. 32.). Of the last verse of this chapter I have given no explanation; because connected, at least, as it is, I do not understand it. Dr. Clarke says, *Wherever the unbelieving Jews and wicked men are, there also will the judgment of God follow them.* — Dr. Whitby says, *Wherever the Jews are, there also will the sword of the Romans, whose ensign is the eagle, be ready to devour them.* The reader may take which of these explanations he chooses: I like neither of them. — Perhaps indeed the expression, *where the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together,* may be only, as some have interpreted it, a proverb, signifying, that *similar causes will always produce similar effects*: so that when the disciples say, *Where, Lord?* or *Of what destruction*

do

CHAP. principles, nor his security on worldly calculations,
XVIII. — But in all your distresses, said Jesus, be fervent

1. in prayer to God. Fervent prayer will always weigh with your heavenly father. — On this head he
2. spoke the following parable. — In a certain city lived a corrupt judge, who regarded neither God
3. nor man. In the same city lived also an oppressed widow, who brought her complaint before him.
4. 5. But though the justice of her suit had no weight with the judge, her assiduity moved him. This woman and her cause, said he to himself, are matters of no concern to me, yet my own quiet is; and I will hear her case merely to avoid her importunity. —
6. 7. 8. If then an unjust judge, said Jesus, will hear the petition of a suitor on so vile a motive, shall not a righteous God attend to the prayers of his faithful servants? Though he may not immediately grant their requests, he will always attend to their distresses, and sooner or later relieve them. — On this great occasion, however, added Jesus, on which I now speak — the approaching ruin of the Jews — there are very few whose faith shall make them the objects of God's mercy.

do you speak? Jesus's answer might admit the following explanation: "*I spoke first of the destruction of Jerusalem; and afterwards led your attention to the last great day: for wickedness shall always, both here and hereafter, produce misery.*" For myself, I think this the best sense.

8. Some make the obscure expression in this verse to be a prophecy of the corruption of religion at the time of Christ's second coming.

To

To this instruction, which Jesus had just given 9-
 his disciples on *feruency of prayer*, he added the fol-
 lowing parable, as an *exhortation to humility*; which
 he addressed to some of his hearers, whom he knew
 to have too high an opinion of themselves. — Two 10-
 men, said he, happened to meet in the temple.
 One was a Pharisee; the other a publican. The 11-
 former, full of spiritual pride and self-importance,
 professed his innocent life, and thanked God for
 his superiority over such a wretch as stood before
 him. My fasts, said he, are frequent; my offerings 12-
 to God, abundant. — The publican, in the mean 13-
 time, standing in a distant corner of the temple,
 and scarce daring to lift his eyes to heaven, smote
 his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner!
 — And yet, added Jesus, this despised publican 14-
 returned from the temple more justified in the sight
 of God than the boasting Pharisee: for self-exaltation
 is among those things which are most opposite to the
 spirit of true religion.

Jesus inculcated humility also on another occasion. 15-
 Some Jews in the neighbourhood bringing their

11. *The Pharisee stood, and prayed thus with himself.* It should be translated, *The Pharisee stood by himself, and prayed thus*; that is, he would not deign to come near the publican for fear of pollution. See Isa. lxxv. 5.

12. The tithes, on which the Pharisee valued himself, were the temple-offerings.

14. *Every one, says the text, that exalteth himself shall be abased.* It is worth remarking, that our blessed Saviour repeats this maxim almost in these very words, three several times. Matt. xxii. 12.; and again Luke xiv. 11.: and in many other places the same sentiment is expressed. From this let us judge of its importance.

children to him, desired he would bless them. But the disciples conceiving this to be an unseasonable interruption, rebuked their forwardness. Jesus, however, ordering the children to be called, laid his hands on them: and then turning to his followers, These, said he, are the true emblems of my disciples. He only who has the innocence and purity of a little child, is qualified to be a member of my kingdom.

18. Soon after, a young man of some distinction, coming to Jesus, and accosting him by the name of *good master*, desired to be informed how he should attain eternal life? — Jesus, observing from his manner of address that he had acknowledged him to be the Messiah, first questioned him about the commandments; and finding that he had a good account of himself to give on these points, told him, it was so far well. But now, said he, I must put your faith to a trial. Sell what you have and give it to the poor, and trust me for your reward in heaven.

20. 21. — This injunction decided the affair. The young man was very rich; and not expecting to be put to such a proof, abruptly retired. — Jesus on this observed the very great difficulty of a rich man's be-

16. It was a great question among the Jewish rabbins, at what time a child was capable of receiving everlasting life? One rabbi said, From the time he was born — another held, from the time he could speak — a third, from the time he was circumcised — a fourth, from the time he could say, amen. Our Saviour might have some allusion to these opinions. See Lightfoot's *Tal. Exer.* in locum.

21. See the parallel place, Matt. xix. 26.

ing

ing properly disposed to receive the gospel : and when 26.
 his disciples expressed their concern at what he said;
 he added, that he spoke only of man unassisted by di- 27.
 vine grace. By God's grace, said he, all the bad
 dispositions of our hearts, and all the temptations of
 the world, may be conquered.

Peter could not help, on this occasion, reminding 28.
 Jesus, in his zeal, that he and his fellow-disciples
 had left all and followed him. — Jesus never gave 29. 30.
 self-exaltation the praise it demanded ; but contented
 himself with saying, that no man gave up the things
 of this world for the sake of religion, who should
 not even in this life receive abundantly more com-
 fort than he could have received in possessing
 them, and in the world to come everlasting hap-
 piness.

After this preparation, Jesus told his disciples still 31. 32. 33.
 more plainly than he had yet done, that their present
 journey to Jerusalem should end in his being treated
 with every indignity which his enemies could invent ;
 and that finally, he should be put to death ; but on
 the third day, he assured them, he should rise again.
 — The disciples, however, notwithstanding this 34.
 plain language, had no clear conception of what he
 meant.

27. St. Matthew and St. Luke consider our escaping the snares
 of riches, as owing only to the *grace of God*. St. Mark (x. 24.)
 adds our *own endeavours* : so that it is plain our security depends
 on both.

35. Jesus had now arrived near Jericho ; where a
 36. blind man sitting by the road side, and hearing a
 multitude pass along, inquired the occasion of it.
 37. Some of the crowd telling him that Jesus of Naza-
 38. reth was passing that way ; he cried with a loud
 voice, and calling him by the name of Jesus, the
 son of David, begged he would have mercy on him.
 39. The people rebuked his importunity ; but he still
 40. continued his cries, till Jesus coming to the place,
 41. ordered him to be brought to him ; and asked him,
 what he wished for ? To this the blind man an-
 42. swered, Lord, that I may receive my sight. Jesus
 immediately restoring him, said, his great faith had
 procured that blessing for him. He then followed
 43. Jesus with the rest of the people ; and was joined by
 the whole crowd, in praising God for so wonderful a
 mercy.

- CHAP. Soon after Jesus had left Jericho, a man, whose
 XIX. name was Zaccheus, a chief tax-gatherer, was greatly
 desirous to see him. But not being able, as he
 1. 2. 3. was a man of low stature, to satisfy his curiosity in
 the midst of a crowd, he climbed into a tree near
 4. the road. — Jesus coming to the place, looked up,
 5. 6. 7. 8. and bad him come down ; telling him, he should go

2. The publican not only collected the Roman tribute, but he had the power of dividing the assessment among the inhabitants of his district. This gave him great opportunities of dishonesty. Zaccheus, who was, *chief of the publicans*, had this power still more in his hands.

with

with him to his house.—Some of the Jews seeing Jesus there, took great offence at his freedom with a person of so notorious a life as Zaccheus had been supposed to lead. The event, however, shewed how unjustly they judged. For Zaccheus, on this intercourse with Jesus, became so entirely convinced of the wickedness of his past life, that he stood forth before all the people there assembled, and made open confession of his sins; declaring, that for the future he intended to lead a new life. The oppressions he had been guilty of he would recompense four-fold; and to make *amends* where he could not make *restitution*, he would give half of what he possessed to the poor. — Jesus told him, that his repentance and faith should secure to him the gracious promises made to Abraham, his father. And then turning to his adversaries, he added, You see the end of the Son of man's coming upon earth: he came to save that which was lost.

9.

10.

Jesus by this time drawing near Jerusalem, and observing that many of those who followed him had entertained thoughts of his intending, on his arrival there, to attempt some temporal deliverance, spoke the following parable to shew them that his kingdom was entirely of a spiritual kind—that all mankind were first to pass through a state of trial—and that afterwards, at the consummation of all things, he should come in his glory and call them to an account before they passed into a state of happiness.

11.

12. pines or of misery, — A certain prince, said he,
 inheriting a kingdom, went to receive his title to it
 13. from his principal lord; and calling his servants, he
 gave them money, which he ordered them to im-
 14. prove against his return. The generality of the
 people, in the mean time, taking offence at him,
 15. rejected his government. — Having succeeded in his
 design, he returned, and called his several servants
 16. before him. The first had improved a single pound,
 17. which he had received, to ten. At this his lord
 expressing his satisfaction, gave him a very large re-
 18. compence. A second, who had made only half the
 19. 20. improvement, received only half the reward. But
 at length came one, who brought with him the ori-
 ginal sum wrapped up in a napkin, which he had put
 21. to no use, telling his lord, that knowing his austerity,
 he was afraid, and brought back the money just
 22. as he had received it. — Out of your own mouth,
 23. returned his lord, will I judge you. If you knew my
 disposition to be such, why did you not endeavour to
 procure my favour by putting my money to use?
 24. Then turning to those who stood near him, Take the
 pound, said he, from him who has not used it, and
 26. give it to him that hath ten pounds. For he who

12. Our Saviour seems here to have had in view the manner in which Herod, Archilaus, and other princes, went to Rome to receive their several titles from Cæsar.

25. I have left out this verse, as it is thought to be an interpolation, and is not found in many of the best MSS. See Bishop Pearce *in loc.*

bath

hath improved properly what he had, shall receive more and more; while he who hath neglected his trust, however small, shall lose that little which he already possessed. And as for those who rejected my government, let them suffer the punishment their rebellion deserves. 27.

Jesus having now arrived at the mount of Olives, near Bethany and Bethpage, sent two of his disciples into one of those villages, where, he told them, they should find an ass's colt, which he ordered them to bring; instructing them what to say to the owner of it, if they met with any difficulty. Every thing happening as Jesus had said, they brought the colt, and laying their cloaths upon it, set him thereon. 28.29.30. 31. 32.33.34. 35. — In this humble triumph he descended the mount of Olives towards Jerusalem; the multitude spreading flowers and garments before him, praising God for all the mighty works he had done, and crying, Blessed is the king, that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace and glory attend him! — It happened, that some of the Pharisees being among the crowd, took great offence at their rejoicing, and desired Jesus to check their clamour. But he gave them to understand, that it was a very proper occasion for the people to testify their joy: and that if these 36.37.38. 39. 40.

38. See a note on Matt. xxi. 11.

40. The passage in the original, *The stones would immediately cry out*, is a strong figurative expression: conveying, I think, the sense I have given.

should be checked, others would rise up to celebrate this triumph.

41. 42. As Jesus descended the mount of Olives, he had a view of the whole city of Jerusalem, spread in all its splendor before him. The recollection of its approaching destruction moved him with compassion. He stood over it and wept; lamenting its hardened, impenitent state, which prevented every intention of mercy. The days, said he, are coming, when
43. thine enemies shall surround thee, and straighten thee
44. on every side, and lay thee level with the ground—
45. blind as thou art to all the approaching signs of thy dissolution.——Jesus then entering the city, alighted at the temple; and being greatly offended at finding the courts of the Gentiles filled like a market, with
46. buyers and sellers, he drove them all out, saying; It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves.——
47. After this, he continued teaching in the temple, during the day, and in the evening retired to Bethany.

- In the mean time, the chief priests and Scribes assembling, consulted how they might destroy him.
48. But not daring to attack him openly, because of the

43. With what exact particularity this prophecy was fulfilled, Josephus informs us. To encompass the city with a wall was thought an impracticable work. Titus, however, animating his soldiers, completed it, and literally *kept the inhabitants in on every side*.

46. Isa. lvi. 7. and Jerem. vii. 11. See also the parallel place in Matthew.

people, who held him in such reverence, they attempted to get matter of accusation against him from his discourses. With this view, they desired he would inform them by what authority he had entered the city in triumph, and driven the traders out of the temple? — Jesus told them, he would answer their question by asking them another. What think you, said he, of the baptism of John? Was it of divine or of human authority? — This question included an answer, for whatever the authority of John was, such also was the authority of Jesus. The Scribes saw the difficulty, and were confounded with it. If, said they among themselves, we shall allow the authority of John to be *divine*, we can give no reason why we do not believe in Jesus. But if we call it *human*, we shall draw upon ourselves the resentment of the people, who are all persuaded that John was a prophet. They were reduced to the necessity, therefore, of saying they could not tell. Neither then, said Jesus, shall I tell you by what authority I do these things.

He then shewed them, in a very severe parable, that God would certainly punish them in the end, for rejecting all his calls of mercy; and would adopt the Gentiles in their room. — A certain man, said he, planted a vineyard; and being about to take a journey, let it out to husbandmen. At the season, he sent a servant to demand the fruits: but the husbandmen treated him roughly, and refused his demand. He sent afterwards other servants: but

CHAP.
XX.

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9. See a note on Matt. xxi. 33.

- 11.12.13. with the same success. At length he determined to send his son; to whom, he doubted not, they would pay respect. On the contrary, when they saw him, imagining that by his death the inheritance should be theirs, they fell upon him, and killed him.
14. What, therefore, said he, shall the lord of the vineyard do to those wicked husbandmen? He will certainly come with power and destroy them, and call in other labourers into his vineyard, who shall give him the fruits in their season. — From the answer which the chief priests and Scribes made to Jesus, it was plain they understood the meaning of the parable. — Jesus then recommended to their consideration that passage in the psalmist, *The stone which the builders rejected, is become the head-stone of the corner*: thus pointing out to them, that as the corner-stone united the two sides of a building together, so should Christ unite Jews and Gentiles in one church — at the same time shewing them, that the prophet considered *them* as the builders, who rejected that stone. — He then added, that he who stumbled at it should suffer: but those impenitent people on whom it should fall, should be ground to powder.
15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. The chief priests, however, angry as they were, durst attempt nothing openly against him. All they hoped was to insnare him in his discourse: and for this purpose they employed artful men to circumvent him.
- It was, at that time, a great question among the Jews, whether, as a free people by their descent from Abraham, they ought to acknowledge any foreign

foreign prince by paying tribute to him? — This 21. 22.
 question, some who were employed by the chief
 priests, brought to Jesus; feigning themselves, at
 the same time, to be entirely devoted to his opinion,
 for which they had the greatest reverence. The
 difficulty of the question lay in making Jesus offend
 either the Jews on one hand, or the Romans on the
 other; and their view in it was to obtain some pre-
 tence against him. Jesus, knowing their design, bad 23. 24.
 them shew him the tribute-money. On their pro-
 ducing a Roman coin, which was current money
 among the Jews, he asked them, Whose image and
 inscription it bore? — They answered, Cæsar's. —
 Give then to Cæsar, said Jesus, the things that are 25.
 Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's. By 26.
 an answer so full of wisdom, his enemies were dis-
 concerted, and retired in silence.

After them came a body of Sadducees. This sect 27.
 denied a future state, and brought a question to
 Jesus, as they imagined, of peculiar difficulty.
 Master, said they, Moses commands, that if a man 28.
 die without children, his brother shall take his wife, 29. 30. 31.
 and preserve the family. Now we have an instance 32.
 of seven brethren, who all, one after another, in
 obedience to this law, married the same woman.
 We desire to learn, therefore, if there be a future 33.
 state, which of the seven brethren shall hereafter
 claim the woman? — In answer to this question, 34.
 Jesus first shewed them the impropriety of judging
 of the next world by the affairs of this. In this
 U 3 world,

35 36 37 world, said he, marriage is necessary: but a state of immortality renders a succession of inhabitants needless. — And as to the principle on which your question proceeds, he added, if you believe the scriptures, you must also believe in a future state. For you cannot suppose that God, who styles himself the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, would style himself the God of persons who did not exist. — This drew from some of the Scribes, who were of a party opposite to that of the Sadducees, great commendation. And from this time, none of his opposers took the courage to question him again,

41. 42. 43. Jesus then asked them a question. How is Christ, 44. said he, David's son? David plainly acknowledges him his superior, saying, *The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy foot-stool.* — This question receiving no answer, 45. he turned to the people, and said, Avoid that desire 46. of superiority, that religious pomp, and hypocritical solemnity, to which you see the Scribes addicted. For a pretence they make long prayers, while they are guilty of every kind of extortion. But their hypocrisy only increases their guilt.

CHAP. XXI. As Jesus was leaving the temple, he observed many people throwing their offerings into the trea-

I. 2.

38. By a slight alteration in the text, the words, *for all live unto him*, are changed into *all who live are his*; which makes the argument much firmer. See Bowyer's Conjec.

1. See notes on Mark xii. 41, and 44.

fury;

fury; and among them a poor widow, who threw
in a mere trifle. But even that trifle, Jesus observed
to his disciples, was more acceptable in the sight of
God, than many of the richest offerings: for God
did not rate a charitable act by the greatness of the
gift, but by the disposition of the giver.

Some of the disciples afterwards observing the
great splendour with which the temple was adorned,
and particularly the amazing bulk of many of the
stones, Jesus told them, that the days were ap-
proaching, when not one stone, in all that building,
should be left upon another. — This led the disci-
ples to inquire into the time of this event; and to
ask what sign should precede it?

In the first place, said Jesus, take care that you
be not deceived by any pretended deliverers, many
of whom shall arise under the title of Messiahs. But
before deliverance, expect distress. You shall hear
of commotions, wars, famines, and every kind of
misery. Be not, however, terrified: these things
must needs happen. Nay even before these general
calamities arise, you must experience great opposi-
tion and persecution for the sake of the truth: but
it will be the more established through your per-
severing testimony. — Nor be solicitous on these
trying occasions, how you shall answer your op-
posers. The spirit of God shall direct you. Only
settle this well in your minds, that the opposition

5. *How it was adorned with gifts.* Tacitus (Hist. v. 8.) speaks
of its extraordinary wealth.

- you must meet with shall be very great. The prejudices of men shall overpower their natural affections. You shall be hated of the world; and many of
18. 19. you even put to death. But let it be the great ground of your resignation, that you are always
20. under the protection of God. — When Jerusalem shall be surrounded by a heathen army, then know,
21. 22. 23. that its destruction approacheth. Then take all
24. the prudent means of escape, and pray to God to assist your flight. For among all the instances of ruin and destruction that ever happened in the world,
25. 26. this surely shall be the greatest. Nor only shall the city of Jerusalem be destroyed, but the whole Jewish
27. government shall be dissolved; and the Jews shall become a standing monument of the establishment of the Messiah's kingdom, and a confirmation of the truth of
28. 29. 30. my promises. — As surely therefore as you judge of the coming of summer by the budding of the leaves;
31. so surely may you judge the approach of these
32. 33. events by the signs I have given you. Heaven and earth are not more steadfast and established. Even
34. 35. 36. this generation shall see them fulfilled. — But to im-

18. Bishop Pearce and others explain this verse as if they should be secure from the mischiefs of the Jewish war. This does not seem satisfactory. It seems rather to be a proverbial expression, intimating not any particular deliverance; but that they should always be safe under the protection of God. Many of them suffered martyrdom; but still this did not annihilate the promise.

— 24. *They shall fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive:* Luke is here more full than the other evangelists. In confirmation of this passage, we are assured by Josephus, that eleven hundred thousand Jews were destroyed by the sword, and near a hundred thousand taken prisoners.

prove

prove these great events to the utmost, let them carry your thoughts forward to those *familiar* events of *death* and *judgment*. Sit loose to the things of this world, and be always ready to receive your heavenly Father's call; which may be as sudden and unexpected as the event I have been declaring: and let it be your constant prayer, that you may be found worthy, at the last day, to stand before the Son of man.

Thus Jesus continued teaching in the temple during the day, where he was always attended by great crowds of people; and at night he retired to the mount of Olives. 37-38.

In the mean time, the Scribes and chief priests were eagerly bent on putting him to death: but they feared to make any open attempt during the passover, as the people universally held him in such respect. During their conferences on this subject, Judas Iscariot, who had now resolved on the design of betraying his master, went to them, and offered his services to this purpose. So unexpected an offer greatly pleased them, as it removed their perplexity; Judas undertaking, for a sum of money, to betray him into their hands, at a time when the multitude could have no intimation of their intention. CHAP. XXII. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.

While this design was carrying on, Jesus had retired with his disciples to the mount of Olives; from whence he sent two of them into the city, to provide a place where he might eat the passover. 7. 8. 9.

10. As you enter the city, said he, you will see a man
 11. carrying a pitcher of water; follow him, and inquire
 12. at the house he enters for the guest-chamber; and
 13. the master of it will immediately shew you a proper
 14 15. room. This was accordingly done, and the passover
 16. was made ready. — As Jesus sat down with his
 17. disciples, he told them, he had greatly desired to
 18. eat this last passover with them, as it was a type now
 19. about to be fulfilled. He wished also, he said,
 20. to drink this last paschal cup with them; which
 21. he gave among them, telling them, that type also
 22. was now completed, and should thence forward
 23. cease. — In the room of these paschal rites Jesus
 24. instituted his last supper. He took bread, and
 25. breaking it, delivered it among them, saying, Eat
 26. this in remembrance of my death. Then taking
 27. the cup, he ordered them to drink it likewise in
 28. the same solemn manner, in remembrance of his
 29. blood, which was shed for the sins of men. The
 30. Son of man, said he, must suffer, as hath been fore-
 31. told. But woe to that person by whom he is betrayed
 32. — and yet that person is now among you.
23. 24. This drew on a general inquiry round the table:
 yet so slightly were the disciples affected on the

16. *Until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God* — that is, until the type be fulfilled on the establishment of the gospel.

17. St. Matthew mentions the bread before the cup. We may conclude therefore it was among matters of indifference which was taken first.

20. None of the evangelists mentions so plainly as St. Luke does the substitution of the sacramental supper in the room of the passover.

whole,

whole, and so little did they understand the nature and intention of Jesus's passion, or the high offence about which he was inquiring, that they soon after entered into a dispute with some warmth, upon their several pretensions to greatness, when the Messiah's kingdom should be established. — Jesus, in order to dispel these undue prejudices, reminded them of the difference between his kingdom and the kingdoms of this world. They who preside over the kingdoms of this world, said he, exercise unbounded power under gracious titles. But among you, let every one who wishes to be exalted, seek his exaltation from humility. Imitate the example which I set you; and as you have followed me through all my labour and temptations on earth, so shall you be members of my spiritual kingdom, and receive hereafter its blessed distinction. — But in the mean time you must expect to undergo great trials and sufferings.

Then addressing himself to Peter, he added, that he had particularly prayed for him; and bad him, when his faith was established, comfort each weaker Christian. — Peter with great vehemence answered his master, that he was ready to suffer any extremity

25. *Called benefactors.* Antiochus, king of Syria, took the title of *Euergetes*, or benefactor: so did Demetrius, and some others.

30. There is no occasion, I think, to consider the phrase, *judging the twelve tribes of Israel*, in a literal sense. See a note on Matt. xix. 28.

31. The whole of this speech *seems* to be addressed to Peter; yet the former part of it, contained in the 31st verse, includes all the disciples. The word in the original is, *υμεις*, not *σιν*.

34. for his sake. — But Jesus checked his forwardness by telling him, that the cock should not crow that night till he had thrice denied him.

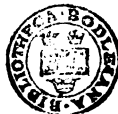
35. Jesus then thought it proper to remind his disciples again of the very great trials that were approaching. When I sent you out, said he, to preach
36. 37. the gospel, all was smooth and easy before you. But now you must arm yourselves against great persecution. For every thing I have told you of *my* sufferings, which shall be the beginning of *yours*, shall now
38. be speedily accomplished. — The disciples mistaking his meaning, as if he wished them to arm literally in his defence, produced two swords. But Jesus checked their mistake.

39. From the paschal supper, he retired with his disciples to the mount of Olives; and bidding them
40. pray to God to assist them in this great approaching trial, he withdrew a few paces, and kneeling down,
41. Father, said he, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me — nevertheless, not my will, but thine be
42. done. As he thus prayed earnestly, he fell into an
43. 44. agony,

38. We are rather surprised at finding two swords among them: but the road from Galilee might be infested with robbers, (many of the roads about Jerusalem we know were, see 2 Cor. xi. 26.) and these two swords might probably be carried by way of defence. One of these swords, it afterwards appears, was Peter's. John xviii. 10. Or perhaps they carried these two swords as a guard against wild beasts, which also infested that country.

42. The best interpretation seems to be, that our Saviour did not pay for the removal of his death; but of that bitter agony, through whatever cause, which accompanied it.

44. There are instances of bloody sweats arising from agonizing conflicts. Dr. Mead in his Med. Sac. cap. xiii. says, *Contingere interdum*



agony, and drops of sweat like blood fell from him; and there appeared angels from heaven strengthening him. When he rose from prayer, he returned to his disciples, and finding them asleep, he rebuked them for their unconcern in an hour of such distress.

While he was thus speaking, a multitude of armed men appeared, with Judas at their head, who went up to Jesus and saluted him. Jesus mildly expostulated with him for so base an act. The disciples in the mean time prepared to defend their master; and one of them drawing a sword, wounded a servant of the high-priest. But Jesus turning to them, forbade this hostile appearance, and healed the man. He then asked the officers who came to apprehend him, what occasion there was for all that caution and secrecy? I have been daily, said he, teaching in the temple, and no man made any attempt against me — But this is the hour in which the powers of darkness are suffered to prevail.

From the mount of Olives, the soldiers carried Jesus to the high-priest's palace, where a council of the principal Jews assembled to examine him.

interdum poros ex multo, aut fervido spiritu, usque adeo dilatari, ut etiam exeat sanguis per eos, fiatque sudor sanguineus. — And in Thuanus's history, we have an instance: A gentleman, says he, under the apprehension of being hanged — tam indignæ mortis vehementi metu adeo concussus animo fuisse, ut sanguineum sudorem toto corpore funderet. Thuan. Hist. lib. ii. — Diodorus Sic. also speaks of this effect from the bite of a particular serpent. Lib. xvii. p. 560.

54. Jesus was now in the hands of the Roman soldiers. See a note on John, xviii. 12.

In

55. In the mean time, Peter followed at a distance ;
 and entering the palace, with the crowd, sat down in
 56. 57. 58. the hall among the servants at the fire. While he
 59. 60. was there, three persons, one after another, chal-
 lenged him as belonging to Jesus. But he denied
 each time ; declaring with great vehemence, that he
 61. knew him not. — Immediately the cock crew ; and
 Jesus, who was in the same room, turning round,
 gave Peter a look which brought him at once to him-
 62. self. He retired instantly to a private place, and
 poured out his distress in a flood of tears.
63. 64. 65. While this passed, they who guarded Jesus treated
 him with every indignity ; blinding his eyes, striking
 him on the face, and bidding him declare who struck
 him.
66. About midnight the chief priests and Scribes being
 67. 68. all assembled, Jesus was brought before them, and
 asked whether he professed himself to be the Mes-
 69. siah ? — Jesus told them that as nothing he could
 say at present would have any effect, he must refer
 them to that future time when they should see an
 70. awful proof of his power. — They all immediately
 considered this as implying his being the Son of
 God : and upon their urging him, he declared it
 71. plainly. — On this they all cried out, What farther
 need have we of witness ? We ourselves can now
 testify his blasphemy.

CHAP. . From the palace therefore of the high-priest, they
 XXIII. immediately carried him before Pontius Pilate, the

1. 2.

66, The text says, *is soon as it was day* : that is, according to
 the Jewish mode of reckoning, as soon as midnight was passed.

Roman

Roman governor, accusing him of setting up claims to royalty, and exciting the people against the government. — Pilate accordingly asked him, whether he had any pretensions to be king of the Jews? To this Jesus answered, that his pretensions were merely in a spiritual sense; not in that in which they accused him.

A very short examination convinced the Roman governor that the accusation was of no weight. He told the chief priests therefore, that he saw nothing criminal in the person they had brought before him. — This only produced more eagerness on their part. In vehement language they assured Pilate, that he had stirred up the people to sedition through the whole country, from Galilee even to Jerusalem. — Pilate, hearing of Galilee, asked whether Jesus were a Galilean? and finding that he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him, in compliment, to that prince, who happened to be at that time in Jerusalem. — Herod was glad of an opportunity, which he had long wished for, of satisfying his curiosity with regard to Jesus, of whom he had so frequently heard. He asked him many questions therefore, and hoped to have seen some miracles. But Jesus did not satisfy his curiosity, nor answer the vehement accusations of the chief

7. This was Herod Antipas, who had beheaded John. He was son of Herod the Great, who destroyed the children; and uncle to Herod Agrippa, who beheaded James, and *was eaten of worms*. Acts xii. He was great uncle to that Agrippa before whom Paul pleaded.

11. priests. Herod therefore, thus disappointed, treated Jesus, in return, with great contempt, and sent him back to Pilate — The civility, however, of Pilate on this occasion, opened a friendly intercourse between him and Herod, which had not before subsisted.
12. 13. 14. 15. Pilate therefore sitting again in judgment, told the chief priests, that as both king Herod and he had examined Jesus, and found no proof of the guilt laid to his charge, he should, after some slight punishment, dismiss him. This he proposed to do agreeably to an annual custom they claimed of having some capital offender released at the passover.
16. 17. — This proposal however displeased them; and as they claimed an option in the case, they all cried out, desiring that a criminal, named Barabbas, who had lately been committed to prison for sedition and murder, might be released. — Pilate made a second effort to save Jesus; but what he said was drowned in a general cry, Away with him, — Away with him — Crucify him. — After a third attempt to save him, Pilate at length gave way; and releasing Barabbas, passed sentence on Jesus.
18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. On this, they led him away immediately to crucify him, obliging one Simon, a Cyrenian, whom they met, and probably supposed to be his disciple, to bear his cross. — Many people also from the city had joined the Roman guard, who were carrying

26. See a note on Matt. xxvii. 32.

27. The chief priests were now under no apprehension of a rescue, as Jesus was in the hands of the Romans.

Jesus to execution. Among them were several women, who followed with great lamentation. Jesus turning to them, bad them not weep for him, but for themselves and their children: Calamities, said he, are coming on this devoted place, beyond any thing of former times; and if the righteous shall not escape the wicked, what will be the end of the wicked themselves? 28.29.30. 31.

The chief priests had contrived, with a view to fix the greater disgrace on Jesus, to execute two malefactors at the same time. With these, therefore, he was led to a place called Calvary, where he was crucified between them. *Father forgive them*, said Jesus, looking mildly on his executioners, *they know not what they do*. 32. 33. 34.35.36. 37.

The soldiers having finished their work, sat down to divide his garments; while the chief priests and their party derided him; crying, *He saved others, let him save himself, if he be the Christ, the chosen of God*.

The soldiers then offered him vinegar in derision; and took up their favourite idea of ridicule, *If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself*.

30. The expressions in this and the foregoing verse seem only strong figures to denote great calamities. *To call on the mountains to fall on them* was proverbial.

31. This verse is obscure: but we are led, I think, to the sense I have given, from observing, that in many parts of scripture *green trees* represent *good men*; and *dry trees*, *bad*. See Ps. i. 3. Ps. lii. 8. Hos. xiv. 8. Jer. xvii. 8. Job xv. 32. Ezech. xx. 47. It was also proverbial among the Jews, *that two dry sticks would burn a green one* — that is, two bad men would corrupt a good one.

38. An inscription also was placed over him, in different languages, *This is the king of the Jews.*
39. Even one of the thieves who were crucified with him, reviled him, crying out, *If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.* — But the other, who was a person of a different disposition, rebuked his companion; putting him in mind of his own wretched state — of that guilt, which had deservedly drawn upon them their sufferings — and of the innocence of the holy person who suffered with them. Then turning to Jesus, he said, *Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.* Jesus answered, *This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.*
42. It was about nine in the morning when Jesus was nailed to the cross; and about twelve, a supernatural darkness coming on, threw an awful gloom over the whole scene. About three, the veil of the temple was rent in two parts; by which was figured, that all distinction between Jew and Gentile was now over. At the same instant, Jesus cried with a loud

43. It is probable that the penitent thief might have heard of Jesus before, and might have received favourable impressions of him; though he now perhaps first saw him. At this awful instant he seems to have been so struck with the greatness and majesty of his Saviour, then in the act of dying for the sins of the world, that he acknowledged him to be the Messiah; and in a thorough sense of his own wickedness, professed his full faith and trust in his mercies. He is therefore exactly in the condition of those who have first had the opportunity of embracing the gospel; and had his sins forgiven, on the plain and common conditions which it offers. This case, therefore, has no relation to a death-bed repentance, when people have long enjoyed the opportunities of hearing the gospel, and have neglected them.

voice; and soon afterwards saying, *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit*, expired. 46.

Great agitation seized all who were present on this wonderful occasion. The women, who had attended Jesus from Galilee, stood afar off in silent sorrow. The people, who had been drawn together by so uncommon a spectacle, astonished beyond utterance, smote their breasts, and retired. While the Roman officer who attended the execution, seeing the many amazing circumstances which had accompanied this great event, cried out with terror, Certainly this was a righteous man. 47. 48. 49.

In the evening, a person of consequence among the Jews, whose name was Joseph, of the city of Arimathea, who had never consented to the death of Jesus, but was in his heart inclined to him, as the promised Messiah, went to Pilate, and begged the body; which he wrapped in fine linen, and laid in a new sepulchre of his own, which had been hewn out of a rock. Nothing more could be done that evening, as it grew late; and the sabbath approached. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54.

The women also, who had attended Jesus to the cross, had the same pious intention which Joseph had, of embalming the body: and having prepared 55. 56.

46. Matthew and Mark mention some of the words which Jesus spoke when he *cried with a loud voice*. Luke only testifies, that he did cry out; and then gives one of his last dying expressions. John records another, *My work is finished*.

CHAP.
XXIV.

1. 2. 3. spices, came the next day after the sabbath, very early in the morning, for that purpose. But on their arrival at the place, they found the stone rolled away and the body gone. — While they were under the surprise naturally raised by such a circumstance, they were astonished at the appearance of two angels, standing near them in bright cloathing; who, gently quieting their fears, asked them, Why they sought the living among the dead? The angels then told them their Saviour was not there, but was risen; and reminded them of what Jesus himself had said in Galilee — That he should be delivered into the hands of sinners, and be put to death, and rise again the third day. — This they soon recollected; and leaving the sepulchre, went to inform the disciples. But on them their relation had no effect. Peter, however, to obtain what proof he could, ran immediately to the place; where he found the linen cloaths lying folded up, and the body gone; which began to awaken his faith.
13. It happened, the same day, that two of the disciples were walking to a village called Emmaus, 14. 15. 16. about six or seven miles from Jerusalem; and as they were talking of what they had heard, a stranger 17. joined them, and asked the cause of that dejection which appeared in their looks and discourse? — 18. To this one of them, whose name was Cleopas,

4. In our translation it is rendered *in shining garments*: in the original it is *in garments streaming out light*.

18. Cleopas is supposed to be the same as Alphaeus, the father of James the less, and Judas.

answered,

answered, -That he imagined a mere passenger through Jerusalem must have heard of the wonderful things which had just happened there. — The 19.20.21. stranger asked, What things he meant? — They 22.23.24. then told him of Jesus, the great prophet of Nazareth — of their expectations that he should have delivered Israel — of their disappointment in his death — and lastly, of the wonderful story of his resurrection from the dead ; which had been attested by some people of their acquaintance, on very probable grounds. — The stranger, assuming an air of 25. 26. authority, chid their incredulity in matters so plainly pointed out by the prophets as the death of Christ, and his glorious exaltation after it. — He then 27. began with Moses ; and touched cursorily on all the prophecies which related to the Messiah.

By this time they drew near the village ; and the 28. stranger appeared as if he meant to go farther. But 29. they, delighted with his conversation, urged the lateness of the evening, and prevailed on him to accompany them into the house. — As they sat 30. down to meat, he took bread, and giving thanks, brake it, and gave it to them — This action 31. opened their eyes ; and they knew him to be their Lord and master. But as their joy was ready to

25. Mr. Collins pretends to found his doubts on the resurrection on the little evidence it afforded, even to those who were on the spot. If he had acted consistently, he should next have been convinced of the truth of it from their caution in believing it, and from their being convinced at last — The word *αροντοι*, which is translated *fools*, means *thoughtless, inconsiderate, inattentive*, or some equivalent expression.

32. burst out, he vanished from their sight — Then comparing their sentiments on the road, and recollecting the authority and wisdom with which he had explained the scriptures, they were astonished how it were possible for them not to have known him before.
33. That they might not delay the communication of this great event, they returned that night to Jerusalem; and going to the eleven apostles, they found
34. that Peter had already informed them of his having
35. seen Jesus since his resurrection. To Peter's evidence they added theirs; and gave a recital of all the circumstances of their walk to Emmaus.
36. While they were thus speaking, Jesus himself
37. stood among them; and said, in his usual manner of salutation, Peace be unto you! — At first they were alarmed and affrighted, supposing they had
- 38, 39. seen a spirit. But Jesus soon quieted their fears; asking them why they were afraid? Behold, said he, my hands and my feet. It is I myself. Touch me, and be convinced. A spirit hath not flesh and
- 40, 41, 42. bones, as you see me have. — He then shewed
43. them the prints of the nails on his hands and feet.
- And

34. Our Saviour's appearing to St. Peter, before he appeared to any of the other disciples, is mentioned by St. Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 5. *He was seen of Cephas; then of the twelve.*

43. Our Saviour's eating, after his resurrection, seems a great difficulty. We have also similar instances of angels, which occur in the Old Testament. Do the bodies of glorified spirits perform animal functions? Or, is the carnal body assumed in this world, and deposited in the next? — transmuted, as it were, from spiritual

And to assure them in a still stronger manner, that he was clothed with a real body, he took food and eat.

Thus, said Jesus, you see the great chain of prophecy, which I so often mentioned to you, is now complete. Christ hath suffered, and hath risen from the dead. — These great points Jesus set before them in so strong a manner, that they became more enlightened than they had ever been. — He then added, that they were the appointed witnesses to the world of all these things; and that, through their ministry, repentance, and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, from Jerusalem, where they should begin their ministerial office. He concluded with ordering them to wait in that city, till they should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, which should enable them to perform the great work to which they had been appointed.

He then led them out to the mount of Olives, near Bethany, where, laying his hands upon them, and

to carnal, and from carnal to spiritual, according to its situation? — We have not however much to do with difficulties of this kind. From what hath been explained to us, we have ground sufficient to make us acquiesce with patience in the ignorance of such things as have not been explained.

44. The Jews divided their scriptures into three parts—the law, the prophets, and the *hagiographa*. At the head of this last division stood the *psalms*, which therefore denominated the whole.

50. There is some confusion in the accounts which the several evangelists give us of the scene of our Saviour's actions

52. and blessing them, he was parted from them, and ascended visibly to heaven. They followed him with their eyes in faith and hope as he ascended; and having worshipped him, returned to Jerusalem with great joy; praising God daily in the temple for all his wonderful works; and waiting, with
53. holy hope, for the completion of their master's promise.
-

after his resurrection. That he met his disciples in Galilee, is very plain; and it appears from this passage, that he afterwards returned into Judea. We are told the same things also in Acts xiii 31.

53. There is something peculiarly grand and sublime, I think, in St. Luke's account of our Saviour's ascension, from the 44th verse to the end.

END OF THE GOSPEL BY ST. LUKE.

THE GOSPEL
OF
SAINT JOHN.

THE GOSPEL

OF

SAVED JONAS

P R E F A C E

TO

S T. JOHN'S G O S P E L.

ST. JOHN is supposed to have lived in Judea, at First laid siege to Jerusalem. On the foresight of that great event he retired to Ephesus; where he continued till the reign of Domitian. By this prince, in the time of a general persecution, he was banished to Patmos, an island in the ~~Aegean~~ *Aegean* sea. But in the succeeding year, on the death of Domitian, he returned to Ephesus, where he lived till near the age of an hundred years.

Some interpreters suppose, that he wrote his gospel in the decline of life — that he had seen the other gospels, and added his own as a supplement. Others imagine, that he wrote it with an immediate intention to oppose some leading heresies of the times: and it is probable from the great stress which he every where lays on the divinity of Christ, that he had at least this in his view; though the first supposition of his adding a supplement to the other evangelists might have been his *general intention*. — He seems also to have taken particular pains to shew the unreasonableness and malice of the Jews in rejecting the gospel.

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with his disciples, which he concludes with a prayer, 383 — Circumstances that attended Jesus's being seized, and carried before the high-priest; with Peter's denial, 390 — Circumstances of his trial before Pilate, 393 — of his crucifixion, 397 — of his burial, 400 — and of his resurrection, 401 — his intercourse with his disciples after his resurrection, 402.

ST. JOHN.

CHAP. I.

THAT holy person, of whom this narration treats, being united to God from eternity, was one together with him. It is he who created the world. It is he who offers salvation to mankind. He is a light shining through darkness. Before his face God sent his holy messenger, John the Baptist, to draw men by his testimony, to follow this true light, which He intended for the direction of mankind. — And yet even that very world which he created, received

CHAP.

I.

1. 2.
3. 4. 5.
6. 7. 8.

9.
10.

1. Many learned men, and especially Dr. Lardner, have shewn, that when St. John speaks of the *Word*, he did it not in conformity to the Platonists, as many have supposed; but merely as it was a customary way of speaking among the Jews. *By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made.* Pl. xxxiii. 6. *Until the time came that this cause was known the Word of the Lord tried him,* Pl. cv. 19. See also Rev. xix. 13.

2. St. John in the two first verses, shews the *nature* of Christ — in the third his *power*; and from the fourth to the nineteenth he expatiates on the *work of redemption*.

4. 5. When St. John mentions Jesus under the similitude of *light*, it is probable he alludes to the *Shechinah*; or divine light, which many of the Jewish rabbins considered as the appearance of the Messiah.

9. Better translated; *which coming into the world, enlighteneth every man.*

11. him not. Those very creatures to whom he gave
 12. life, rejected the salvation he offered. But to those
 who shall accept him, and believe his promises, he
 will give the glorious privilege of being the sons of
 13. God. They shall be born again, not after the
 manner of men, but through the influence of the
 14. Holy Spirit of God. — It was this divine person
 who condescended to dwell with man; and we, who
 had nearer access to him, are the witnesses of his
 15. glory and power. In this testimony also, John the
 Baptist joined; giving the fullest evidence of his
 16. greatness and excellence. — Nor was the holy reli-
 gion he revealed a less convincing proof; from the
 excellence of which hath flowed every grace that
 17. hath been communicated to us. The law of Moses
 was defective and partial. That of Christ, being
 full and clear, offers salvation to all mankind. Never
 18. before was the will of God thus revealed to fallen
 man.

11. Some commentators apply this immediately to the Jews; as if they were more peculiarly his *own*. I should suppose it refers equally to all who reject him.

13. Instead of *αὐτοῖς*, the Codex Veronensis reads *αὐτοῖς*: which changes the sense from the *persons*, who were born, to *Christ*.

14. *The Word was made flesh; and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory.* This passage is commonly, and I think very justly, produced in proof of the divinity of Christ. The word *dwelt* might be translated *tabernacled*; so that here seems to be an allusion to the Deity's dwelling between the Cherubim. In the same manner as God appeared there; the Son veiled, or *tabernacled in the human form*, appeared in the flesh.

16. *Grace for grace.* Perhaps the precise meaning of these words may be, *One institution of Grace in the room of another*; as the law of Moses is mentioned immediately after.

John's

John's testimony to this great truth was given 19.
on this occasion. The austerity and holiness of his
life and doctrines having spread his fame through
Judea, the council at Jerusalem thought it proper
to send certain priests and Levites, to inquire,
Whether he were the Messiah? — John, with great 20.
earnestness, declared he was not. — They then 21.
asked whether he were Elijah (whom the Jews
supposed would rise again to introduce the Messiah),
or any other of the old prophets? — He assured
them he was not. — They desired then to know 22.
who he was, that they might return an answer to
those who sent them? — John answered from the 23.
prophet Isaiah, that he was *the voice of one crying
in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord.*
— The Pharisees, (for of that sect were these in- 24. 25.
quiring priests) desired then to know on what au-
thority he baptised; as his baptism certainly implied
the introduction of a new religion? — John told 26. 27.
them, it implied nothing as from himself; but had
reference entirely to that superior person, who should
soon make his appearance among them; and whose
coming he was directed by the prophets to proclaim.
— This transaction passed at the Ferry, or passage- 28.
place, on the river Jordan, where was commonly a
great resort of people, and where John at that time
had fixed his station.

21. John could only mean, that he was not *really the person* of
Elijah: for if he knew his own designation, he was certainly that
person who was to come *in the spirit and power of Elijah*. Luke
i. 17.

29. The next day, John, seeing Jesus coming towards him, pointed him out to the people as the Lamb of God, who came to fulfil all the typical sacrifices of the law, by taking away the sins of the world.

30. This is he, continued John, of whose superior excellence I spoke. When I began my ministry, I

31. knew him not. I knew only in general, that such a person should arise; and that I was to prepare his way by calling men to repentance. Now I can bear the strongest testimony. I saw the spirit of God

32. descending from heaven, and resting upon him: and that same revelation, through which I was ordered to preach and baptize, gave me intimation also, that he, on whom I should see that distinguishing sign, was the Messiah, who should baptize with the Holy

33. Ghost. This sign, therefore, I saw, and bear record, that that sacred person, on whom it rested, is the Son of God.

35. 36. It happened, the next day, that as John was standing with two of his disciples, he saw Jesus at

37. a distance; and pointing him out as that eminent person, who was to make atonement for the sins of the world, the two disciples followed Jesus, and, by

38. 39 40. his permission, attended him. — One of them, whose

41. name was Andrew, immediately went in quest of his brother Simon, and told him, with great joy, that he had found the Messiah; and carried him to Jesus.

29. See Exod. xxix. 10. Levit. i. 4. — iii. 2. — iv. 4.

Jesus, in the spirit of prophecy, gave him the name of *Peter*, which signifies a *rock*; implying that steady support which he should hereafter give to the church of Christ. 42.

The day after, Jesus going into Galilee, found Philip, whom he engaged to follow him. Philip lived at Bethsaida, where Andrew and Peter also lived, from whom he had gained a knowledge of all that John had testified of Jesus. He being desirous also of communicating still farther the joyful information, went to Nathaniel, and told him the happy news of his having seen and conversed with that great person pointed out by the prophets, Jesus of Nazareth, the promised Messiah. — Nathaniel doubting, from the mention of Nazareth, the truth of what Philip had said, Philip referred him to Jesus himself; to whom accordingly they both went. — Jesus seeing Nathaniel coming to him, said, *Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile.* — As 43.
44.
45.
46.
47.
48.

42. This interview between Jesus and Peter differs so *very materially* from that mentioned in Matthew, that we must suppose it a prior one; and that after this transaction which John mentions, Peter returned home; and was not called to *follow* Jesus till that time which is recorded by St. Matthew.

45. Dr. Cave has used arguments which have convinced many learned men that Nathaniel was the apostle Bartholomew.

46. In the text, Nathaniel asks, *Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?* By *good thing*, or *that good thing* as it might be rendered, it is probable he might mean the Messiah, who is so called by the prophet Jeremiah (xxxiii. 14.). Nathaniel also no doubt knew, that the Messiah was to be born at Bethlehem.

- Nathaniel was expressing his surprise at this salutation from a person who, he had no reason to believe, had never before heard of him, Jesus told him farther, that before Philip called him, he had seen him under the fig-tree. This alluded to some particular circumstance well known to Nathaniel; on which he cried out, in an ecstasy of conviction, that he was sure Jesus was the Son of God, and the expected
49. Messiah. — Jesus, pleased with his ingenuity, in divesting himself of all his prejudices on the first evidence, told him, that his faith should hereafter be confirmed by many kinds of evidence still stronger than this.
50. 51.

- CHAP. II. The first occasion on which Jesus shewed his divine power, was at a marriage in Cana, a town of Galilee, to which Jesus, his mother, and disciples were invited. It was the third day of the marriage;
1. 2. 3.
4. and wine falling short, Mary mentioned it to Jesus. Jesus told her, that the time of his publicly shewing himself to the world was not yet come; of which
5. he was the best judge. However, he gave her such

51. *Hereafter you shall see heaven open, &c.* This, perhaps alluding to that remarkable vision of Jacob (Gen. xxviii. 12.), seems to apply that communication between heaven and earth, which the patriarch saw, to gospel times.

4. *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* In those early days, a woman of the greatest fashion was addressed in the style of *a yvova*: so that the expression implies nothing disrespectful. The words *What have I to do with thee?* may be rendered, *What hast thou to do with me?*

intimations

intimations of his intention, that she had the attendants do whatever he should order. — There stood, in an adjoining room, six large earthen vessels, each containing several gallons, for the purpose of those purifications which were common at a Jewish entertainment. These vessels were filled, by Jesus's order, with water, which was drawn off, and carried to the governor of the feast; who was so surprised at the excellence of the wine, into which it had been immediately changed, that, ignorant whence it came, he mentioned it to the bridegroom, as the best they had yet had. The servants soon after explained the affair; and the greatness of the miracle displayed the glory of God, and confirmed the faith of the disciples.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

11.

From

11. I cannot understand this miracle as it is *commonly* understood — that is, as a supply of wine, in the manner in which we use wine in our entertainments, by way of regale. Wine was the common beverage of Judea: and as the Jewish wedding-feast lasted seven days, the liquor might be now, on the third day, nearly spent: especially, as we may suppose, from the guests who were invited, that the bridegroom was probably a man in a low station. Our Saviour therefore gave a supply under the same idea as he fed a hungry multitude. — The word *μεθυσθωσι*, which we render *well drunk*, I believe, might easily be found, in good authors, without any idea of intemperate drinking. Hippocrates plainly uses it in opposition to drunkenness; ordering his patients, in some particular cases, *μεθυσθηναι, πολλην αλλα μη ες υπερβολην*. (De ratione victus, lib. iii.) — Dr. Clarke is pleased with an interpretation of Dr. Clagget's on our Saviour's words to his mother; as if he had said, "I am not unwilling to be sought to by persons in distress: but I take this matter, in which you are so much concerned, to be of little moment, and not worth a miracle. The time is not yet come, though it is very near, in which I shall confirm the truth by doing beneficent mi-

12. 13. From hence Jesus went with his relations and disciples to Capernaum. But he made only a short stay at that place, as he was desirous to be at Jerusalem at the feast of the passover, which was approaching. — There he found the courts of the temple occupied by dealers in cattle and other commodities, under the pretence of furnishing necessaries for the temple-sacrifices; all of whom he drove out, saying, *Make not my Father's house a house of mer-*

acles indeed for the relief of miserable persons: but here is no such occasion. Nevertheless I will not think much to satisfy you in this expectation, and to do this office of courtesy to my kindred, though there be no absolute need of it." — I cannot say I am so much pleased, as Dr. Clarke is, with this interpretation of Dr. Clagget's. I do not think that our Saviour meant, in what he said to his mother, to express, that it was a *matter of little moment*, and not *worth a miracle*: in which case, I presume, he would not have wrought one. Nor do I think it was consistent with his character to work a miracle *for courtesy*. His words appear plainly to imply a gentle reproof for interfering with the time and occasion of his working miracles, which rested solely with himself: but the evangelist, I think, could never mean that Jesus should call any occasion *trifling*, which, as he himself adds, tended to *manifest forth Jesus's glory, and make his disciples believe on him*.

14. St. John mentions this fact as happening in the first year after our Saviour began his ministry; the other evangelists mention it in the last. Some writers, among whom is Dr. Lardner, are of opinion it was twice performed; and indeed from the 23d verse of this chapter, and the 22d, 23d, and 24th of the next, the opinion has considerable foundation. Besides, if the account we have of St. John's revising the other gospels, before he wrote his own, be true, we may suppose he gave this event its proper place. — At the same time we must own, there is so little attention paid to the *exactness* of chronology in the sacred writers, that there is no great difficulty in supposing, with other able interpreters, the action to have been only one. The *thing itself* was thought by all the evangelists worth recording; but it might appear of little moment whether it happened at one passover or at another,

chandise,

chandise. Then his disciples recollected the passage, 17.
in which it is said, *The zeal of thine house hath eaten*
me up.

Some of the Jews then asked, What sign he gave 18.
them to shew his authority to do these things? —
Jesus, knowing their hardened disposition, answered 19.
them only by a prediction of his resurrection: *De-*
stroy this temple, said he, and in three days I will
raise it again. — What! said the Jews, a building 20.
which was above forty years in erecting, will you
raise in three days? — But Jesus spoke figuratively, 21.
intending his own body; and his disciples, after 22.
his resurrection, remembered his words, which still
the more confirmed their faith.

During the time of the passover, many people, 23.
seeing his miracles, believed on him. But he went 24. 25.
cautiously among them; and put himself very little
in their power. From his divine knowledge, he was
well acquainted with the uncertainty of mankind,
and the little dependence that he could place upon
them.

Among those who thought favourably of Jesus, CHAP.
was a man of consequence among the Jews, a Pha- III.
risee, whose name was Nicodemus. Though he had 1. 2.
not resolution to profess his faith openly, yet wishing

17. See Pf. lxi. 9.

20. Josephus informs us that the works of the temple were con-
tinued through a still longer space of time.

- to know somewhat more of that doctrine, which he had seen so miraculously proved, he came to Jesus by night, with a view to make a more particular inquiry; professing, at the same time, his belief in that divine mission, which had been confirmed by such wonderful works. — Jesus told him, that his doctrine lay in a very short compass. A man, said he, must be born again, before he can be a member of my kingdom. — Nicodemus not comprehending the expression, Jesus explained himself by saying, that nobody could be his disciple, who, after professing himself such by baptism, did not change his heart by a thorough repentance, and such holiness of disposition, as should be assisted farther by the Spirit of God. As the mere natural life, he told him, depended on flesh and blood, so did the religious life on the influence of the Holy Spirit. — Does this, said he, surprise you? Do you believe nothing which you do not receive through your senses? The wind, which is invisible in itself, is seen in its

3. The word *ἀνωθεν*, which in our version is rendered *again*, is by some interpreters rendered *from above*. Both expressions will nearly admit the same meaning.

5. *Except a man be born of water, and of the spirit.* As Nicodemus probably knew that baptism was intended to supersede circumcision, and as our Saviour knew what great stress the Jews laid upon this rite, his argument may perhaps bear this sense: You Jews seem to conceive of circumcision as if it had some inherent virtue, whereas, in fact, it is of no value at all, unless accompanied with a renewal of heart; and therefore lest my disciples, who use baptism, as you do circumcision, should err in their institution as you do in yours, I tell them, as I now tell you, that except a man be born *of the spirit* as well as *of water*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

effects,

effects. Such also is the influence of the Holy Spirit. — Nicodemus, still not understanding clearly these spiritual ideas, and continuing to express his surprise, Jesus told him he had said nothing but what the knowledge of the law might lead him easily to understand; and that it was prejudice in himself, rather than the want of clearness in the doctrine, which withheld him from the truth. — But, added he, if you cannot receive these plainer parts of my doctrine, which relate to the things of this world, how will you be able to receive those parts of it, which are more immediately connected with the next? truths, which mere man cannot possibly discover; and which the Son of God came from heaven to reveal? — Among these, in particular, is that great truth, which fulfils one of the types of the law — the lifting up of the brazen serpent in the wilderness. As the brazen serpent healed the bodily mischiefs of those who looked at it, so shall the Son of man's being lifted up heal the spiritual mischiefs of all who believe on him. As the one procured temporal health, so the other, through the kindness and love of God, shall procure everlasting happiness. Man may turn the goodness of God either to his happiness or misery. It was God's design, not to condemn the world, but to save it; and he who be-

10. Our Saviour might well wonder at Nicodemus's ignorance; as the *circumcision of the heart*, Deut. x. 16. — Deut xxx. 6 — the *renewal of a right spirit*, Ps. li. 10. — *God's law in the inward parts*, Jer. xxxi. 33. — and many other passages, all seemed plainly to point out regeneration.

19. loves and obeys the gospel, shall, in the end, find
 the reward of his obedience. On the other hand,
 he who rejects this last great offer of salvation to
 mankind, must expect the consequence: and the
 ground of his condemnation is, that such a person,
 from the wickedness of his life, loves darkness rather
 20. than light. The bad man naturally avoids the
 21. truth which condemns him: while the good man
 seeks it, as the ground-work and proof of his
 actions.

22. After this, Jesus and his disciples went into Judea
 23. 24. to preach and to baptize. At the same time, John,
 who was not yet thrown into prison, was baptizing
 at Enon, near Salim, where was a pool of water
 commodious for the purpose,

25. About this time, a dispute arose between certain
 Jews and some of John's disciples, about the effi-
 26. cacy of their master's baptism. And the disciples,
 hurt with the thing, carried it to John. The ground
 of the dispute was, that as Jesus baptized more dis-
 ciples than John, his baptism seemed to be of a
 27. superior nature. — John, with great humility, told
 his disciples, that every man should be satisfied with
 28. what heaven had appointed. You are my witnesses,
 said he, that I always spoke of my own inferiority to

25. Bowyer conjectures, that instead of *μετα Ιερουσαλμ*, the true
 reading should be *μετα Ιωανν*. The sense would then be, *A dispute*
arose between the disciples of John and those of Jesus; which would
 certainly be better, if it were well authorized.

Christ, and considered myself only as a messenger sent before him. I am only the bridegroom's friend : 29.
 it is my part barely to rejoice in his happiness. My 30.
 consequence is now over; his is increasing. His 31.
 commission is of higher authority than that of any of
 the prophets, who, in comparison of him, speak
 only of earthly things. And so far am I from being 32.
 hurt by his superiority, that I am only grieved to see
 you and others turn aside from so divine a teacher.
 He who receives his doctrine, acknowledges the 33.
 truth of God; for his doctrines prove their origin, 34. 35.
 and shew, from the abundance of God's Spirit, which
 rests upon him, that he is the great redeemer of the
 world. The conclusion, therefore, is, that he who 36.
 believeth and obeyeth him, shall inherit eternal life :
 but he who obstinately rejects or impenitently dis-
 obeys him, must expect the consequences of the
 divine displeasure.

After this, Jesus finding that his baptizing such
 numbers (though he baptized only by the hands of
 his disciples) began to give offence to the Pharisees;
 left Judea, and returned into Galilee. His road led
 through Samaria; and being near a town called

CHAP.

IV.

1. 2.

3.

4. 5.

29. *Rejoiceth because of the bridegroom's voice*; alluding to the nuptial song, commonly sung on these occasions. *Solomon's song* is a most elegant specimen of the nuptial song; and seems to be referred to Christ and the church, merely because the church is so often represented in scripture under the idea of a *bride*.

5. Sychar was the ancient Sichem.

Sychar,

6. Sychar, he sat down to rest himself on Jacob's well, so named from a piece of ground which that patriarch gave to his son Joseph.
7. 8. As he sat there, waiting for his disciples, whom he had sent into the town to buy provisions, a Samaritan woman came to draw water. Jesus desiring her to give him some of the water she had drawn, she seemed surprised at such a request from a Jew :
 9. for the Jews and Samaritans were at such variance, that although they had dealings with each other in trade, they had little intercourse of any friendly kind.
10. Jesus told her, that if she knew the opportunity now in her hands, instead of being surprised at his asking common water of her, she would have asked living water of him. — The woman thinking he spoke of the water of some other well, seemed zealous in vindicating the honour of this, which she said had descended to them pure from the days of Jacob. —
11. 12. Jesus told her, that the water of that well, however
- 13.

6. *Jesus being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well.* It were better translated, *sat therefore, or, accordingly on the well*; that is, because he was fatigued.

10. The Jews used to call *springing water* by the name of *living water*. In Gen. xxvi. 19. the word *springing* is thus translated literally in the margin. The woman's mistake therefore of Chrik's words was very easy. The Roman's used the same language :

— Donec me flumine vivo
 Abluero —

11. The woman observed he had *nothing to draw with*. It was a custom then in the east, and is still observed, Thevenot informs us, for all travellers to provide themselves with small leathern buckets, because the wells in those parts were furnished with no apparatus for drawing water.

pure,

pure, afforded only a temporary relief: but the water which he meant quenched all thirst for ever. — The woman not yet comprehending his meaning, desired him to give her some of that extraordinary water. Jesus turning to her, said, Go, call your husband, and come hither. The woman answered, she had no husband. In that, said Jesus, you speak the truth: but you have had five husbands. He indeed, with whom you now live, is not your husband. — The woman, struck with this reproof, which she knew to be the truth, and conceiving him to be a prophet, introduced the great national question, Whether, Jerusalem or mount Gerizim were the more respectable seat of worship? — Jesus told her, it was a question of little importance, as the time now approached when men should worship God neither in one place nor the other — that although the Jewish worship was evidently of a superior kind to theirs, yet both should soon be abolished; and a purer worship established than either — that the pomp and ceremonies of the law should be laid aside; and that, as the nature of God would now be better understood, his holy servants should of course be instructed in a more spiritual kind of worship. — The woman told him, she knew, that when the

20. The Samaritan's argument for mount Gerizim was, its being supposed to be the place where Abraham and Jacob worshipped.

24. *In spirit and in truth*, says the original. *In spirit*, in opposition to lifeless observances — *in truth*, in opposition to those typical representations which were then fulfilled.

26. Messiah should come, he would put them in the way of all truth. — Jesus said unto her, I that speak unto you am he.
27. In the mean time the disciples returning, were surprised to see their master in such earnest conversation with a Samaritan: while she, taking the opportunity, retired abruptly to the town; where she told every body what had happened; and added, that a person who could tell her the most secret transactions of her life, could not be less than the Messiah. On this, numbers went out of the town to see Jesus.
31. In the mean time the disciples bringing their provision, desired him to eat. But he told them, he
32. had other food which they knew not of. And as
33. 34. he observed them to be at a loss for his meaning, he added, that the work which he was sent to accomplish was more to him than food. From the
35. time of sowing, said he, to the time of reaping, you commonly number four months. But our harvest is more advanced. — Then pointing to the Samaritans, as they were appearing at a distance in crowds from the city, he added, our harvest, you see, is ripe
36. 37. already. Thus one soweth, and another reapeth; but the labours of both shall be rewarded — the labours

26. This is, I think, the only place in the earlier part of Jesus's ministry, in which he openly confessed himself to be the Messiah. If among the Jews he was withheld by the fear of giving offence, he was here under no such apprehension. See a note on Matt. viii. 4.

35. *Four months, and then cometh harvest*, was a proverbial expression among the Jews, commonly used at seed-time.

of him who first scatters the seed ; and of him who afterwards reaps the harvest — the labours of Moses and the prophets, who went before you ; and the labours of you, the ministers of the gospel, who succeed and finish their work. 38.

When the Samaritans came to Jesus, there seemed to be a general disposition among them to believe in him. Many indeed openly professed their faith ; and all joined in requesting that he would return with them to the city. He complied with their desire, and stayed with them two days. During this time many converts were made, induced by the force and authority of his preaching ; and told the woman, they believed not on her evidence, but on the evidence of Jesus himself. Such divine discourses, they said, as he made, could only come from the Messiah, the Saviour of the world. 39. 40. 41. 42.

From Sychar, Jesus went into Galilee, avoiding Nazareth, where he knew the people were indisposed to receive his doctrine. But in other parts of Galilee he found a ready reception ; for many of the people had been at Jerusalem during the passover, and had seen the miracles which he had wrought at that time. 43. 44. 45.

43. This seems to be the sense of the passage. St. Matthew says, (iv. 13.) that Jesus *left Nazareth* ; which implies, that he either left it without passing through it, or that he did only pass through it.

46. 47. While he was at Cana, a person of some eminence came to him from Capernaum, begging he would accompany him thither, and heal his son, who lay at the point of death. — Jesus asked him, whether he could not believe without seeing a miracle? —
48. The parent was under such anxiety for his son, that he could think of nothing else, and again mentioned the desperate situation in which he lay. Jesus bad him return home, and he should find his son recovered.
49. He immediately went, believing what Jesus had said. But before he got home, his servants met him with the joyful news of his son's recovery. On finding that he had been restored at the very hour when Jesus pronounced him healed, he himself and all his family became sincere converts. — This is the second miracle which Jesus wrought in Galilee after he had left Judea.

CHAP. V. At the next passover, Jesus went again to Jerusalem. In that city, near the sheep-market, is a bath, called Bethesda, or the *house of mercy*; which name it obtained on the following occasion. — It

46. Τὸ βασιλικὸν means a royal person; or, as is generally supposed, some person of high rank in Herod's court.

48. In the original it is, *Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe*; but Bowyer conjectures, that an interrogation should be placed after πιστεύετε, which makes the sense much easier, by taking off that harshness which accompanies our translation.

1. From the beginning to the end of our Saviour's ministry, there seem to have been four passovers; the last only of which is mentioned by the three first evangelists. St. John takes notice of them all; chap. ii. 13. — v. 1. — vi. 4. — xiii. 1.

had been observed, that the water, through some hidden cause, was sometimes agitated; and that the first person who stepped into it, after its having been thus disturbed, was healed of whatever disease he had. Round this bath were built porticos, in which lay numbers of diseased and infirm people, waiting for the agitation of the water. Jesus coming 5. 6.

4. This account of the pool of Bethesda is full of difficulty. Dr. Hammond makes the angel a messenger, and fills the pool with the entrails of sacrificed beasts, which he supposes gave it a healing quality. This very unphilosophical supposition is sufficiently refuted by Dr. Whitby in his annotations on the passage. — Others again have endeavoured to solve the difficulty by supposing the 4th verse to be an interpolation: but too many MSS. and those of high authority, oppose this supposition. — The best solution seems to be that of Bishop Pearce, who (in his vindication of the miracles of Jesus) supposes, that the pool was only a common swimming bath (as the word in the original implies): but that God Almighty had, during a short time, endued it with the healing quality here mentioned; as one more type, among the many other miraculous types of the Messiah, which had already been given to the Jews. The prophecy of Zechariah, that *there should be a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness*, was here realised into a type. This healing quality, however impressed, the Jews ascribed, as they did all the operations of Providence, to the ministrations of angels; which St. John expresses by saying, *An angel came down*; &c. — Woolton and others, who have taken offence at this miracle, have laid great stress on the silence of Jewish writers with regard to this miraculous pool, particularly of Philo and Josephus. But Philo lived in Egypt, at too great a distance to examine a miracle of so short a duration: and as to Josephus, he evidently wrote for pagan readers; and all along lays as little stress as he can even on the Mosaic miracles. Much less ground therefore have we to suppose he would dwell on any thing of this kind. I shall conclude this note with a few lines, which shew how capable the pool of Bethesda is of furnishing beautiful poetic images.

So, erst, an angel o'er Bethesda's springs,
Each morn descending, shook his dewy wings;
And as his bright translucent form he laves,
Salubrious powers enrich the troubled waves.

DARWIN.

to the place, and observing, among others, a man who had been afflicted with a disease thirty-eight years, asked him what expectation he had of being healed?

7. — Very little, answered the man; for I have nobody to assist me, when the water is troubled: and while I am making an attempt, another person, more ready, steps in before me. — Jesus bad him rise, and take up his bed and walk; which command the man instantly obeyed.

10. It happened to be the sabbath-day when this miracle was performed: and some of the Pharisees seeing the man carrying his bed, told him, it was not lawful for him to carry a burden on that day.
11. The man answered, that he who had healed him, bad him do it. But on their enquiry who the person was, he could not inform them, as Jesus had immediately left the place. — Soon afterwards Jesus met him in the temple; and reminding him of his cure bad him sin no more, lest God should punish him in a worse manner. — The man now knowing it was Jesus who had healed him, informed the Jews.
16. On this ground, the Jews commenced a violent prosecution against Jesus, as a violator of the sabbath.

6. From the answer which the man gave, this seems to have been the meaning of Jesus's question.

9. It hath sometimes been remarked, with wonder, that among so many diseased people, one only was singled out to be healed. But in this, as well as every other case, it is impossible to judge, unless we knew all the circumstances.

15. He seems to have done this with a good intention.

16. Some interpreters are of opinion, that Jesus was brought before the Sanhedrim; and that the apology for himself, which
contingues

bath. Jesus told them, that, in imitation of God, 17.
 his heavenly Father, he confined not his works of
 charity to time and place. — This only incensed 18.
 them the more; as they declared him now, both
 guilty of a violation of the sabbath, and of making
 himself equal with God. — Jesus told them, that 19.
 he acted in all things in union with God — and that 20.
 the great works he had done, and the greater works
 which he should do, all tended to convince them
 of this truth. The power of raising the dead, said 21.
 he, which the Father hath, the Son hath also; and 22.
 the power of judgment the Father hath committed
 entirely to the Son, that he also should be the ob- 23.
 ject of divine honour. So that whoever honoureth
 not the Son, dishonoureth the Father. Hence,
 therefore, he who believeth and obeyeth my doc-
 trine, shall be redeemed from all that sin and guilt, in
 which a mortal state involves him, and shall inherit
 everlasting life. For the Son of God is now come 25.
 to offer salvation to fallen man; and all who hear
 and obey his voice shall be saved. For the Father, 26. 27.

continues to the end of this chapter, was made before that council. This supposition is chiefly grounded on the 33d verse, as it is plain (from John i. 19.) that the Sanhedrim is there alluded to. If we consider our blessed Lord's apology in this light, we certainly give it additional dignity.

19. Some writers have brought this passage to oppose the divinity of Christ: but the natural interpretation of it, and its connection with ver. 17, seem to stand thus. *My father worketh on the sabbath, as well as on other days, in the great designs of his providence; and I work in like manner. Therefore the Son (ver. 19.) can do nothing of himself, that is, separately from the Father; but in, small things, united with him.*

20. See a note on Mark xiii. 32.

as I said, hath committed to him both the power
 28. of raising to life, and of casting into judgment. Be
 assured, then, the hour cometh, when all that are in
 the grave shall hear his voice, and shall come forth;
 29. they that have done good, unto the resurrection of
 life; and they that have done evil, unto the resur-
 30. rection of damnation. — You see then with how
 little justice you accuse me of the breach of a law
 of God, when I do nothing without his power and
 31. 32. 33. authority. If I alone bore testimony to myself, my
 34. 35. 36. testimony might be suspected; but I have the tes-
 timony of John also, for whose great character you
 all have the highest esteem. You remember the
 testimony which he bore, when you sent to consult
 him. I urge this merely to draw you to the truth,
 by the strength of such evidence as is most suited
 to you; for myself, I lay little stress on any human
 37. authority. The miraculous works that I perform,
 are, beyond all, a testimony that God hath sent me.
 And though here the witness is invisible, yet the
 38. testimony is evident. — But your unbelief is proof
 against all; for you know as little of that God who
 testifies, as you do of me, to whom he bears testimony.
 39. You profess to search the scriptures as the fountain
 40. of life, and yet they strongly testify of me. — It is
 not, therefore, for want of sufficient evidence, that
 you reject the life I offer; but through the influence

30. That this verse takes up the argument again, from a tran-
 sition, seems plain (as Dr. Clarke observes), both from the sense,
 and from its beginning just as the 19th verse does, which begins
 the argument.

of your wicked affections. Every thing tends to shew you that, I am not guided by any worldly views; yet you have not the love of God sufficiently in you to listen to any instruction. — But though you receive not me, who come in God's name, you are ready to receive others, who come in their own. Nor can it be otherwise, while a love of the world and its honours lies at your hearts. — Think not that I mean to accuse you. But remember, there is one in whom you trust, even Moses himself, who will accuse you. For if you had believed the writings of Moses, you could not but have believed in me, of whom Moses testifies. But if you believe not his testimony, it is impossible you can pay any attention to my doctrine.

After this, Jesus passed over the sea of Tiberias, and retired to a mountain with his disciples. But his retreat could not be hid: for it was about the time of the passover; and many people who had seen his miracles, and were going that way heard of him, and began to crowd about him. As he saw the people gathering in that solitary place, he was desirous to give them some refreshment, before he sent them away; and asked Philip, (though with a view only to try him,) where he might procure food to supply so large a multitude? Philip told him,

CHAP.

VI.

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44. Our Saviour's telling the Jews of *their receiving honour one of another*, seems to have reference to the members of the Sanhedrim; who were remarkable for giving each other sounding titles.

- that all the money they had could not purchase bread enough to supply every one with a morsel.
8. 9. But another of the disciples, at the same time, informing him that a lad there had five loaves and two
10. small fishes, he ordered the people, who were about five thousand, to sit down in companies on the grass;
11. and taking the bread and fish, he gave thanks, and distributed them, through the hands of his disciples,
12. among the people. When they were all satisfied, he had his disciples gather up the fragments, that
13. nothing might be lost. With these they filled twelve
14. baskets. — The multitude, on seeing this great miracle, universally declared that Jesus was that prophet whom they expected. And, indeed, their zeal;
15. in a little time, arose to such a degree, that Jesus, finding them inclined, in a tumultuary manner, to place him at their head, retired from them, unobserved, to a place of solitude.
16. 17. In the mean time, as evening approached, the disciples took boat, and coasted the lake towards Capernaum, expecting to take up Jesus on some part of the shore; but he no where appeared, and a dark
18. 19. tempestuous night came on. They were not however kept long in suspense, before he came to them
20. 21. walking on the lake. At first they were afraid; but when he spake to them, they gladly received him.

15. It always appears, that the multitude followed Jesus under the idea of his being that leader who should restore their temporal grandeur.

21. See a note on Matt. xiv. 25.

into the boat, which immediately arrived at the place they intended.

The next day, the people having observed the disciples had gone alone, and that there was, at that time, no other boat near the place, conceived however, that Jesus was, in some way, gone to them, and getting into a few boats, which had just arrived from Tiberias, went to Capernaum in quest of him. When they had found him, they expressed their surprise how he got there. Jesus, instead of gratifying their curiosity, told them, they followed him not so much for the sake of obtaining conviction from his miracles, as for the sake of the worldly advantages which they expected from him. Be not, said he, solicitous about these things; but let your attention be fixed on that spiritual food, which is meant to be the nourishment of your souls, and which the Son of man shall give you, as the Father hath impowered him to do. — They asked him, What they should do to obtain this spiritual food? — Jesus mentioned himself as the only person from whom they could obtain it. — They asked him, What extraordinary sign he gave them of being the dispenser of this spiritual food? He had fed them indeed, in a miraculous manner, with earthly bread; but could he give them bread also from heaven, as their fathers had eaten manna in the wilderness? — Jesus told them, that the spiritual food which he meant, was much superior

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- to what Moses had given their fathers. It not
 33. only came from heaven, but it had this peculiar
 advantage, that it was able to nourish them, not
 34-35-36. merely a few years, but for ever. — The Jews,
 however, not yet understanding him, Jesus told
 them plainly, that when he spake of spiritual food
 from heaven, he meant himself and his doctrine,
 which they could not relish, while their minds ran
 37. on temporal things. But I will kindly receive all
 those said he, who endeavour, to obtain the assist-
 38. ance of the Holy Spirit of God, and who come to
 me with honest and sincere hearts. All such may be
 39-40. assured, on the same evidence on which they believe
 in me, that this is the will of my Father also ; and
 that he hath instructed me to draw together all his
 faithful servants who believe and obey the gospel, and
 to raise them to everlasting life.
41. As Jesus had now plainly pointed out his mean-
 ing, and shewn them, that by the bread which
 came from heaven, he meant himself, they began to
 42. take offence ; and looking only at his earthly parent-
 age, they cried, How inconsistently doth this man
 talk of coming from heaven, when we all know
 43-44. from what parentage he sprang ? — Lay aside, said
 Jesus, these undue prejudices ; and endeavour to be

33. Ο καταβαινων, in the original, should be translated, *He which cometh*, not *He which cometh*.

44. The kind of drawing here meant (to interpret one part of scripture with another) is that sort of *drawing* of which Jeremiah speaks xxxi. 3.) where God says to Israel, *with loving kindness have I drawn thee*.

among

among those whom the gracious influence of the Spirit of God shall draw to me as the heirs of eternal life; and to be among those of whom the prophet speaks, *they shall all be taught of God.* This prophecy, Jesus added, is now fulfilled. Every one, therefore, who is disposed to listen to this gracious instruction, will come to me. — Do not, however, suppose, that you shall have any immediate revelations or visions from God. His will is revealed through me; and whoever believeth in me and obeyeth his will, shall inherit eternal life. — In this light then I call myself the bread of life. The manna, which your fathers eat in the wilderness, could only preserve a mortal life. That is the true bread of life which qualifies every one, who eats it, for everlasting happiness. I call myself this bread, not only on account of that doctrine which purifies the soul, and fits it for a state of happiness — but also, because I shall give my own life to procure the life of the world.

This speech occasioned some murmuring among the Jews: and as Jesus, who was then teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum, continued, in the same figurative stile, to represent the faith of his true disciples, under the ideas of eating his flesh and drinking his blood, many of his followers took great offence, and declared themselves unable to comprehend such doctrines. — What, said Jesus, if you should see the Son of man, as you hereafter may,

45. See Isa. liv. 13. Jer. xxxi. 33, 34.

- ascending into heaven, would not this be a convincing proof that he also descended from heaven?
63. And with regard to the language I use, why do you conceive it in that gross, verbal sense? It is the spiritual application only to which you ought
64. to attend. But, continued Jesus, who well knew the carnal dispositions of many around him, I know there are some who have no faith; and
65. without faith it is impossible for any one to feel the influence of God's Holy Spirit, which draws him to me.
66. Many of Jesus's followers, taking offence at these doctrines, soon after withdrew themselves from him.
67. — Then Jesus, turning to the twelve, said, Will
68. you also leave me? — Peter, with great zeal, answered, Lord, to whom shall we go; Though others may wilfully mistake your words, we are well
69. assured they are the words of eternal life: and though others may waver in their faith, we are thoroughly convinced that you are the Christ, the Son of the
70. living God. — Be not, said Jesus, too confident of your own good dispositions. I have indeed chosen you twelve to be my constant companions: but notwithstanding that, one of you will be my greatest
71. adversary. — This was a warning to Judas Iscariot, who afterwards betrayed him.

[CHAP. After this Jesus continued some time longer in
 VII. Galilee, not choosing to go into Judea, where the
 1.2.3.4.5. malice of the Jews was so determined against him.
 But as the feast of tabernacles approached, his brethren

thren (who had yet no firm belief in him) wished him to leave that obscure part of the country, where he then was, and to go with them into Judea, where he might make himself more known, and increase the number of his followers. — My situation and yours, said Jesus, are very different. Against you the world bears no malice; but me it hateth, as one in opposition to all its views. — He then left them to go to Jerusalem at their own time, and continuing a while longer in Galilee, he afterwards went privately to Jerusalem alone.

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In the mean time, the rulers of the Jews were very inquisitive to find him, while the multitude seemed divided; some saying he was a good man; others, that he was a mere seducer. None, however, cared to speak openly in favour of him, for fear of giving offence to the chief priests.

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It was about the midst of the feast, when Jesus went up to Jerusalem; and as his manner was, he taught publicly in the temple. It happened that several of the Jews, who wished him ill, were present, and were astonished at his discourses. How can a person, say they, born and educated as this

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5. It is probable his brethren, like others, had their early prejudices to conquer; but we need not suppose they were thorough infidels; or that they did not give this advice from their hearts. It is certain they became afterwards firm believers. See Acts i. 14.

16. man hath been, attain such knowledge? Jesus told them, they might well be surprised at this, on a supposition that his knowledge were attained in the common way of men; but the wonder ceased, when they considered his doctrine as derived immediately
17. from God. Every one, added he, who is disposed in his heart to obey my doctrine, will soon also learn to know from whence it comes. A truly good man will find my doctrines and his own feelings so entirely to agree, that this very agreement will be an
18. evidence beyond any argument. One great mark of truth, which my doctrine certainly carries with it, is this; it seeks not the glory of its teacher, but of its divine author. How well qualified you are to judge of these doctrines, and with how much sincerity you act, may easily be seen. That law, which you yourselves acknowledge—the law of Moses—you do not observe. Even at this very time, you are meditating murder, and are resolved to put me to death.
20. At so direct a charge the Jews exclaimed, that he was certainly possessed. Which of us, they cried, is
21. 22. resolved to put you to death? — Jesus taking for granted their malicious intentions, and the cause which produced them, did not answer their question but proceeded to tell them, that the cure

15. It is not probable that this knowledge related to any part of human learning, but merely to the scriptures.

16. See a note on Mark xiii. 32.

21. Supposed to be the cure at Bethesda.

which he had wrought on the sabbath day, and which had so much incensed them against him, was not a transgression of the law beyond what they themselves often practised. If the sabbath-day, said he, happen to be the eighth day from the birth of a child, you circumcise him on that day. And is it a greater breach of the law to heal an object of misery? — Lay aside therefore your prejudices, and consider things by the rules of justice and equity. 23. 24.

Some of the Jews observing the free manner in which Jesus spoke, and knowing the designs of the chief priests, asked each other, Whether this could be the person whom they intended to put to death? He teaches openly, said they, as if unconcerned. Others thought it probable, the chief priests might be convinced that he was the Messiah: while many were of opinion, that as *no one could declare the generation of the Messiah*, Jesus could not, according to the prophets, answer that description, because every one knew his family and parentage. — To these objections, Jesus told them, that if it were not for the hardness of their hearts, they might easily convince themselves of his divine original; and by the greatness of his works, be fully satisfied who sent him. — There seemed, however, to be a great division among the people. Some wished to lay hands on him; though nobody attempted it, as his time was not yet come. Those again, who thought favourably of him, said, that when Christ should come, it 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31.

it was impossible he should shew greater power than Jesus had done.

32. The Pharisees finding the attention of the people so much engaged by Jesus and his doctrine, and at the same time observing that a party was rather forming against him, took that opportunity to send officers privately to seize him. — Jesus knew their intentions, and told them plainly, that in a little time he should lay down his life, and return to God,
33. who had sent him : but that time was not yet come ; and till then, it was not in their power to interrupt his designs. — They however either did not, or would not understand his meaning.
- 34-35-36. The last day of the feast of tabernacles was the most solemn of the whole. On that day it was customary for the people to fetch water from the pool of Siloam, which they poured out as a drink, offering to God. This was done in remembrance of

34. Some interpreters suppose the expression, *where I am, thither ye cannot come*, conveys some menace of future judgment. But as our Saviour uses the same expression to his *disciples*, (xiii. 33.) it cannot well have that meaning.

38. *As the Scripture hath said.* This seems not to allude to any particular prophecy, but to the whole tenor of the prophetic writings. If it alludes to any particular passage, it seems to be Isa. lv. 1. which begins, *Ho ! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, &c.* This chapter was always read during the ceremony of bringing water from the pool of Siloam ; and it is probable therefore that our Saviour, who often alludes to visible objects before him, might allude to the priests singing or repeating this chapter.

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the relief their fathers had received in the wilderness from the water which Moses struck from the rock. As the people therefore were performing this ceremony, Jesus put them in mind, that these waters were only the types or signs of that spiritual water which he came to give them: and alluding to the effusion of the Spirit after his death and glorification, he compared it to rivers of living water, which they who believed in him should receive, and be enabled to dispense.

The authority and dignity with which he spake of the future gifts of the Spirit, drew over numbers of people to think favourably of him. Many said, he was the expected prophet, the forerunner of the Messiah. Some said, he could not be less than the Messiah himself: while others doubted, only from his having been born, as they supposed, in Galilee; whereas Christ, they knew, was to be born at Bethlehem, of the lineage of David.

There were some, however, who were of the party of the chief priests, and wished to apprehend him. But nobody durst attempt so bold an action. Even the officers, who had been sent for this purpose, returned without performing their errand; and being questioned, Why they had not brought him,

42. It is rather surprising, that it was not universally known that Christ was born in Bethlehem, from the wonderful circumstances which attended his birth. But we may consider, that thirty years, now elapsed, which Jesus had spent in perfect obscurity, might have effaced the remembrance of these circumstances.

46. This is an exclamation, says the pious Doddridge, which I hope we all make when we read the scriptures.

answered, That it was impossible to offer violence to him. Never man, said they, spake as he did.

47. ——— What! said the chief priests, are you also
mistaken? Have any of the Pharisees believed on

48. 49. him? You will find none but the ignorant multitude
deceived.

50. It happened that Nicodemus, who came to Jesus
51. by night, sat then in council with the chief priests;

and ventured so far to oppose their prejudices, as to
ask, Whether the law condemned any man before

52. he had first been heard? But this only drew on him
the reproof of those who sat at council with him.

What, said they, are you also the Galilean's friend?

53. Look into the scriptures, and see whether you any
where find that the Messiah shall arise out of Galilee?

——— The council, however, finding they could do
nothing effectual against Jesus, put an end to their
deliberations.

CHAP. In the mean time, evening drawing on, Jesus re-
VIII. tired to the mount of Olives; and early the next

1. 2. morning returned to the temple, where, as usual, he
instructed the people.

49. The Pharisees had such an opinion of themselves, that they
used to say, nobody could partake of the resurrection but them-
selves, and such as had connected themselves to a Pharisee by good
offices. *The people*, they would say, are accursed; they are the
footstools of the Pharisees.

52. The *sense*, I think, rather leads as the words are here ex-
plained; and not as we translate them, *Out of Galilee ariseth no
prophet*: for many prophets, Jonah certainly, and probably others,
had arisen out of Galilee: and yet the word *προφητης*, without the
article, rather leads to the sense as expressed in our translation.

In this employment he was soon interrupted by a
 body of Scribes and Pharisees, who brought before
 him a woman taken in adultery; desiring to know,
 with great appearance of reverence and respect,
 whether he did not think she should be put to death;
 as Moses had commanded? Their malicious de-
 sign in this inquiry was to make him obnoxious to
 the Romans, if he said they ought to put her to
 death; or to the Jews, if he said they ought not.
 Jesus therefore, well knowing their intention, seemed
 occupied on his own thoughts; and being in a sitting
 posture, stooped down, as if writing on the ground.
 On their urging the question, he raised himself and
 said, Let him who is not guilty of this sin himself,
 cast the first stone; and then returned to his former
 posture. The Scribes and Pharisees were discon-
 certed with this answer; and not choosing to put the
 matter on such an issue, went off, one by one. Jesus
 raising himself again, and seeing the woman standing
 alone, asked her where her accusers were gone?
 And whether any one had condemned her? To which
 she answered, No one. Neither, said Jesus, do I
 pass any judicial sentence upon you, but reprove you

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6. The intention here was much the same as in the question about tribute-money.

7. The sense seems to require this interpretation of the word *ἀναμαρτυρος*. It could not be expected that the accuser was to be a *sinless* man; but it might be expected that he should be free from that vice of which he accused another.

only for your wickedness, and exhort you to sin no more †.

12. On another occasion, as Jesus was instructing the people in the nature of his religion, and telling them he came into the world to dispel ignorance and wickedness, and through faith to lead mankind to eternal life, it happened that some of the Pharisees were among his hearers; who thinking, from a part of his discourse, that they had gained a good handle against him, told him, that as he had borne testimony of himself, his testimony could not be true. ——— Jesus answered, that to those who were disposed to hear the truth, his own testimony was sufficient: but as they were not so disposed, they required other evidence. They judged, he said, according to the prejudices of the world. But it was not his business at present to pass sentence upon them. Yet the testimony which I offer, said he, is not my own, but is united with my Father's. The law is satisfied with the testimony of two persons.
13. 14. 15. 16. 17.

Mine

† This account of the woman taken in adultery is omitted in some MSS, and in several evangelistries, (or collections of scripture portioned out by the papists for their church-services,) probably because it gave offence, as if Jesus had encouraged adultery. It is plain, however, that Jesus refused only to condemn the woman in a *magisterial capacity*. As a *sinner* he condemned her, and had her *sin no more*.

15. 16. 17. I insert the following explication, which I have met with, of these verses, that the reader may judge for himself. ——— The word *απο* hath a double sense. It signifies both *to form* and

Mine is not single. The mighty works which I have performed are my father's evidence for me. — The Jews asked, whom he meant by his Father? — Jesus told them, their hardened hearts prevented their listening to the divine truths which he unfolded. If they had known him, they would have known his Father also.

These things were spoken in the temple; but nobody durst offer to apprehend him. — Jesus added, your designs against me cannot take place till the time of my suffering arrive. I shall speedily leave you: but if you continue to oppose the truth, you will die in your sins, without being able to follow me. — The Jews in derision asking, whether he would kill himself to prevent their following him; he told them, his words had a very different meaning: He meant to express to them their low and earthly dispositions, which, if not amended, would for ever disqualify them for spiritual enjoyments. It was for this reason, he told them, they should die in their sins; which they certainly should do, unless they purified their affections by believing in him.

an opinion of, and to condemn judicially. In this place, suppose we understand it to mean, *forming such an opinion as a judge does, before he passes sentence*; let us see what would be the meaning of the passage. Christ says, *I judge no man.* My kingdom is not of this world. I do not now judge you. Yet if I should judge, (and I have given you, in the preceding verses, a slight intimation of the opinion I have formed of you,) it is a very serious matter: for my judgment is true, as the father who hath sent me is with me, and assists me in forming a right judgment. — 17. But to return to your accusation of me. You say my record is not true. Now it is written in your law, &c.

25. 26. — The Jews then desiring him to give them a more particular account of his pretensions, he told them, he had already repeatedly declared by whom he was sent. Were it not, added he, for the hardened impenitence of your hearts, I could open many things to you; but I shall leave with you this one consideration — that I received the doctrines, which I have ever taught, from the high authority to which
27. I have always referred. — The Jews still expressing
28. 29. their disbelief, Jesus added, After you have put me to death, it shall then be more evident to you from the great circumstances which shall follow that event, that all my pretensions from the Father, and of acting in union with him, were true.
30. The dignity and force which accompanied these last words of Jesus were such, that many professed
31. their belief in him. Jesus assured them, that if they continued in that profession, they should be his disciples indeed. You shall know the truth, said he,
32. and the truth shall make you free. — This speech again excited the malice of the unbelieving part of his audience. What! said they, can we receive any
33. higher degree of freedom than we have already received from Abraham? — Jesus told them, that
34. wicked people were always slaves, fast bound in the

33. In the text it is, *they answered*, that is, in strict grammar, they who had just professed their belief, answered. But we cannot reasonably suppose, either their faith to be so very inconstant — or that such a speech should shake it. — But grammatical niceties are not always observed. — The Jews must have meant this freedom in a spiritual sense; for in a temporal sense the nation had been often in bondage.

fetters of sin. The slave, said he, is not properly 35.
 a part of the household : but the son certainly is ; 36.
 and he whom the son, under the authority of the
 father, shall make free. That you are descended 37. 38.
 from Abraham, I allow : but as you oppose me with
 such malice, because my doctrine is of too pure and
 heavenly a nature for you, you plainly shew whose
 children you are. — The Jews asked whose chil- 39.
 dren they could be but the children of Abraham ?
 — If you were the children of Abraham, said Je- 40.
 sus, you would do the works of Abraham. But by
 your malice to me, who have told you the truth, you
 plainly shew, that although you are descended from
 Abraham, you possess none of his spirit. Your
 actions discover your true father. — We are no 41.
 idolaters, said the Jews : we worship one God,
 whose children we are. — If God, said Jesus, were 42.
 your father, I, who come from God, and have testi-
 fied myself as such by my works, might expect your
 love. But you allow not my authority, because you 43.
 cannot bear my doctrine. They, who do the works 44.
 of the devil, are the children of the devil. He
 was an enemy to all truth, because he had no truth
 in himself. Thus the only cause of your opposition 45.
 to me is, because I tell you the truth. Either be- 46.
 lieve my authority, or disprove it. An honest, sincere
 heart is all that is wanting for the reception of God's
 word. You have not this ; and certainly therefore 47.
 are not the children of God.

The Jews then in great wrath began to tax him 48.
 with madness, saying, he was worse than a Sama-

49. ritan. — Jesus told them, that every thing they
 50. laid to his charge was founded merely on the obe-
 51. dience he paid to God, whose glory he sought; and
 who would, in his own time, vindicate his word.
 It shall then appear, said he, that they who obey my
 52. 53. doctrine shall never see death. — What! said the
 Jews, with great eagerness, are you greater than
 our father Abraham and the prophets? Yet they are
 54. all dead. Whom do you make yourself? — Jesus
 answered, he made not himself greater or less. His
 honour was from his Father, whom they called their
 55. God. But their hearts and doctrines were as op-
 56. posite to almighty goodness, as his were acceptable
 to it. Your father Abraham himself, said he, re-
 57. joiced to see my day, and considered it as the com-
 58. pletion of all his hopes. — What! said the Jews,
 have you, who are not fifty years of age, seen Abra-
 ham? — Be assured, said Jesus, that before Abraham
 was, I AM.

59. On this, their rage exceeding all bounds, they took
 up stones to put him to instant death: but as his time
 of suffering was not yet come, he miraculously passed
 through them, and left the temple,

CHAP. . Soon after, as Jesus was on the road with his
 IX. disciples, they met a man who had been born blind,
 1. 2.

58. One should imagine, that Christ's asserting his divinity in
 the *very same words* which the Almighty uses (Exod. iii. 14.)
 would be sufficient to establish that great doctrine, if we had no
 other proof. It seems to be very forced criticism which is em-
 ployed on the opposite side.

The

The disciples, supposing that misery of every kind was intended as a punishment for sin; and observing here an instance of a person's being punished before he was able to commit sin, they were perplexed with the difficulty, and laid it before their master. — Jesus told them there was no occasion to suppose that the malady before them was meant at all as a punishment — that temporal evils were laid on men for other causes — sometimes to make them the instruments of God's glory. You see particularly, said he, that these maladies among men afford me many opportunities, while I continue in the world, of manifesting the power of God, and proving the truth of religion. — Having said this, he touched the eyes of the blind man with a little clay, which he had made on the spot; and bidding him go and wash in

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6.

7.

2. *Who did sin, said the disciples to our Saviour, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?* — What they meant by his parents sinning, is intelligible enough; but what they meant by the man's own sinning, before he was born, is not so easy. It could not relate to any notion of original sin, for that was no particular case; and some *particularity* in the case was implied in the question. The most obvious solution of the difficulty is, that the transmigration of souls was, at this time, a popular opinion among the Jews, who believed that a soul, which had sinned in one body, might afterwards be punished in a more imperfect one. That this opinion prevails among the Jews, appears from the writings of Philo. Josephus also (*De bell. Jud. lib. ii. c. 12.*) confirms it; and the author of the book of Wisdom seems to allude to the same doctrine, when he tells us, *that being good, he came into a body undefiled.* Chap. viii. 20. The Pharisees also seem to allude to this opinion in the 34th verse; *Thou wast altogether born in sin.* — Others, not satisfied with this solution, contend, that the Jews of those times believed they were punished, not for their own sins, but for the sins of their forefathers.

7. Blindness, occasioned by disease, had been cured; but to give sight to a man born blind, was considered by the Jews as one

in the pool of Siloam; he was from that moment perfectly restored.

8. 9. 10. They who had seen the man, for many years, sitting blind and begging by the road-side, and seeing him now so perfectly restored, could scarce believe him to be the same person; but calling him, questioned him on the subject. The man told them, that a person, named Jesus, had healed him; and related the circumstances of the cure: but he could not inform them what was become of his benefactor.
11. 12. Soon after, the affair coming to the Pharisees, they assembled in council, and sent for the man; asking the same questions, and receiving the same answers which the people had done before. The great offence was, that the miracle had been wrought on the sabbath-day. Many, therefore, said, It was impossible that Jesus could be a person sent from God, because he had prophaned the sabbath. Others thought it was impossible for a sinner to perform such a miracle. They asked the man, therefore, what he thought of the person who had opened his eyes? — Certainly, said he, I think him a prophet.
13. 14. 15. The Pharisees still seeming to doubt the fact, sent for the parents of the blind man, and inquired of them, Whether this man were their son? Whether he had been born blind? And in what manner

of the characteristics of the Messiah (see Isa. xxxv. 5.); and for this reason it is probable the Pharisees were so desirous of disproving the miracle.

he

he had received his sight? — They answered, he was their son, and had been born blind: but by what means he had recovered his sight, they knew not. But he was of age, they said; and was able to give them the best account himself. — This cautious answer was occasioned by fear; for the Sanhedrim had determined to excommunicate any person who should acknowledge Jesus to be the Messiah. 20. 21. 22. 23.

The Jewish rulers then again called the blind man himself; and bad him attribute solely to God the gracious cure he had received. — As for this Jesus, said they, we know him to be a sinner. — Whether he be a sinner or no, answered the man, I know not. One thing I know, that I was blind, and now see. — They then asked him again, in what manner his eyes had been opened? — The man, vexed at the repetition of their malicious questions, answered, that he had already told them to no purpose. Do you want the means, said he, of being convinced? or have any of you an intention to become his disciple? — On this they reviled him, saying that he was the disciple of Jesus: but for them, they acknowledged no master but Moses. To him they knew God had revealed his will: but as for this Jesus, they knew not from whence he was. — Full of that noble spirit which truth and gratitude inspired, the man answered, Why, this is a wonderful thing, that you know not from whence he is, though you see he hath wrought so great a miracle. Could a sinner have so much favour with God? When did you ever hear before of a person's 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32.

33. son's opening the eyes of a man born blind? If he had not been sent by God, he could have done nothing.

34. This was more than the pride of the Pharisees could bear. What! said they, shall such a sinful wretch as thou art instruct us? — On this, they immediately excommunicated him.

35. Jesus hearing what they had done, found the man, and asked him, Whether he believed in the Son of
36. God? — Tell me, said he, who he is, that I may
37. believe in him. — Jesus answered, I, your bene-
38. factor, am he. — On this the man, with great devotion, falling down before him, expressed his faith in the strongest terms.

39. Jesus, in allusion to the case before him, added, that his doctrine was intended to make a great separation among men. They whose blindness proceeded from mere ignorance, should be taught to see; while they who saw only through pride and prejudice, should be left in their wilful blindness.

40. Some of the Pharisees who were present, supposing that the latter part of this speech alluded to them, asked him, if he thought them blind? —

41. If, said Jesus, you are among those who are blind through ignorance, you are not those of whom I spake. But if your blindness proceeds from prejudice and voluntary error, you are not only blind, but your blindness is guilt. You profess to be teachers of

CHAP.

X.

I.

1. Our Saviour here probably alludes to the ceasing of the Mosaic law, as superseded by the gospel; which became now the only

of the people : but consider well under what authority you act, and what doctrines you teach. He that entereth not the sheepfold by the door, may well be suspected. The true shepherd enters by the door, and performs all the offices of a good pastor. His sheep, in return, know and follow him. But a stranger, whose voice they know not, they will avoid.

The Pharisees not seeming to understand this allusion, Jesus spoke more plainly. — I, said he, am the only door, through which the sheepfold can be entered. All who pretend to open the door of salvation, in opposition to me, are deceivers : though none who are sincere, and desirous to see the truth, can be deceived by them. Whoever, therefore, enters through me, shall find pasture, that will nourish him to eternal life. The impostor has no end, but to destroy for his own advantage. My end is to give life and immortality. I am the true shepherd, ready to lay down my life for my flock. The hireling seeth the wolf coming, and without any affection for his flock, leaveth them to be destroyed. He leaveth them, because he is a mere hireling, and

only allowable way into the sheepfold. Or he may mean, that the Pharisees were false teachers even of the very law they taught. — Sir Isaac Newton, in his remarks on Daniel (p. 148.), observes that Jesus made these allusions to the sheep that were kept in folds near the temple for sacrifices. — He had allusion also, it seems very plain, to the 11th chapter of Zechariah.

5. It was usual in eastern countries for shepherds to lead their flocks out to pasture to the sound of the pipe. In some countries it is yet practised,

careth

13. 14. careth not for them. The true shepherd is united
 15. to his flock. He and it are united, as the Father
 16. and Son are united. Other sheep also I have of dif-
 ferent folds: them also will I draw together, and
 17. unite with these. It is the act of laying down my
 life voluntarily, and taking it again, that is so agree-
 18. able to my Father. The malice of my enemies
 could have no effect against me, unless I chose my-
 self to lay down my life. By my power of taking
 it again, may be seen my power of laying it down.
 Yet in this I act entirely in concert with my Father.
 19. — These discourses, though not clearly understood,
 occasioned much division among the people. Some
 20. said, that Jesus was plainly mad, and did not deserve
 21. attention. Others said, that the late great miracle
 he had wrought on the blind man undoubtedly re-
 futed that charge.
22. 23. It happened, about this time, as he was walking
 in the portico of the temple, (for it was in the winter
 season, near the time of the Maccabean dedication,)
24. that many of the Jews who were there, coming
 about him, desired him to speak in plain language,
 25. whether he were really the Messiah? — Jesus,
 knowing their malicious intentions, told them, if

16. Most probably this is spoken of the Gentiles.

23. Solomon, as Josephus informs us, not finding room enough on mount Sion for the completion of his design in building the temple, raised a maffy wall from the bottom to the top of the mountain; and filling up the intermediate space with earth, founded upon it a vast portico: part of which continued in the second temple, and was known by the name of *Solomon's porch*.

their

their hearts had not been hardened, he had said enough already to convince them. The miracles which he had wrought, bore sufficient testimony to the authority under which he acted. But your unbelief, said he, arises not from the want of evidence, but from the want of an honest, sincere heart. They who are well-disposed will hear and attend to me; and by persevering in their obedience, will resist every difficulty in this world, and inherit eternal life in the next. No violence, nor outward force of any kind, can affect them, through the influence of my Father, with whom I act in perfect union,

This latter speech excited the indignation of the Jews so much, that they took up stones to put him to death. — Jesus reminded them of the many great works he had done; and asked them for which of these they meant to destroy him? — The Jews told him, their indignation was excited, not for his good works, but for his blasphemous discourse, and for making himself equal with God, though he was only a mere man. — How perversely, answered Jesus, do you behave? Are not they who act under the authority of God, styled Gods in your law? And if you allow this, how is it that

30. *I and my Father are one.* This text is brought among the first to prove the divinity of Christ. If the proof depended only on the terms, perhaps it would not be so strong; or we have the words *ἐν ὕμῳ*, where *unity of nature* is not intended, *He that planteth, and he that watereth, ἐν ὕμῳ*; they concur in one design. But certainly the words receive great force from the 33d verse; which shews that the Jews, who must have understood what our Saviour meant, conceived them as a claim to divinity.

35. 36. you are so offended at me, for calling myself the Son of God, when I act so evidently under God's power and authority? If I perform not works beyond the
37. power of man to perform, I claim no credit. But if you see me perform such works as no human
38. power can effect, though you pay no credit to me on my own account, yet believe me at least on the credit of my miracles. — This explanation, instead of
39. softening their rage, excited it. But Jesus passed through the crowd unobserved; and leaving Jerusalem, retired to the parts about Jordan, where John
40. had formerly baptized. — Here many came to him in his retreat, and believed on him, saying, John wrought no miracles, as Jesus doth; while all that John testified of Jesus is true.

CHAP.

XI.

1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

In the village of Bethany lived a family, for which Jesus had always expressed much regard, consisting of a brother and two sisters, Lazarus, Martha, and Mary; the last of whom was the person who anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped them with her hair. The brother being taken ill, the two sisters immediately sent to inform Jesus; who returned an answer, assuring them that their brother's illness should not end in death; but was intended merely that religion and the glory of God should be more confirmed.

6. After this, he continued two days where he was, and then told his disciples he proposed to return
7. 8. into Judea; which surprised them not a little, con-
9. sidering

sidering the late ill-treatment he had met with there.
 — Jesus told them, that as men walk safely in 9. 10.
 the day, and fear dangers only in the night; so he
 was in no danger, till the appointed time of his
 sufferings arrived. He then informed them that 11.
 their friend Lazarus was asleep; and he went to
 awake him. But the disciples not understanding him, 12. 13. 14.
 he told them plainly that Lazarus was dead. And 15.
 I am glad, said he, that I was not with him before,
 as I shall now be enabled to confirm your faith by
 a great miracle. — Thomas was the only one of 16.
 the disciples who seemed to doubt what his master
 had said, and could not help discovering his doubts
 by some expressions of despondency.

In the mean time, Jesus began his journey to 17.
 Bethany; where he found that Lazarus had now
 lain four days in the grave. As Bethany was within 18. 19.
 two miles of Jerusalem, many people from the city.
 (acquaintances of Martha and Mary) had come to
 console them in their distress. It happened there-
 fore, that many witnesses of this great event were
 assembled.

Martha hearing of Jesus's approach, went to meet 20.
 him; and expressed a wish that he had arrived
 sooner. But even now, said she, I know that what- 21. 22.

10. Our translation renders it, *because there is no light in him*. It makes much better sense to translate it, *because there is no light in it* — that is, in the world.

16. Some commentators suppose, and among them Dr. Clark, that when Thomas says, *That we may die with him*, he means with *Jesus*. I think the sense I have taken the more probable.

23. ever you ask of God shall be granted. — Jesus
 24. told her, her brother should rise again. I know,
 said Martha, that he shall rise again at the last day.
 25. — Jesus said, Through me is the resurrection to
 26. eternal life. He that believeth in me, though he
 were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth,
 and believeth in me, shall never die. Do you be-
 27. lieve this? — Martha, with great confidence, ex-
 pressed her firm belief that he was the Christ, the
 28. 29. 30. Saviour of the world. — Jesus then ordered her
 31. 32. to call her sister, who immediately left the house,
 and was followed by the Jews who were with her,
 and who supposed she was gone to weep over her
 brother's grave. She found Jesus in the place where
 Martha had left him; and falling down before him,
 expressed the same wish her sister had done, that he
 had been present before her brother's death.
33. 34. Jesus, seeing the distress and affliction of the
 whole company, was observed to weep. Then turn-
 ing to them, he asked where they had laid him? —
35. 36. 37. As they were going to the place, the Jews seeing the
 concern which Jesus expressed, and concluding from
 thence how great his affection was to Lazarus, asked
 each other, Why a person, who could open the eyes
 of the blind, could not also have healed the disease
 38. 39. of which Lazarus died? — When they came to the
 grave, Jesus looking round him with a sigh, bad
 them remove the stone which closed its entrance.
 — Martha told him that as the body had now lain
 four days in the grave, it was by this time offensive.
 — Did I not tell you, said Jesus, that if you would
 only

only believe, you should see the power of God?
 — They removed the stone, therefore, and Jesus
 having prayed to God in the audience of the people,
 that they might all consider the miracle he was about
 to work as an appeal to almighty power, cried with a
 loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. On this he rose
 from the tomb, bound as he was with grave-clothes,
 instantly restored to perfect health.

This great miracle had its effect on many of the
 Jews, who immediately professed their belief in
 Jesus. But there were some who went to the
 Pharisees, and gave them an account of what they
 had seen. On this the chief priests and Pharisees
 immediately called a council to consider what should
 be done with Jesus. His miracles, they agreed,
 were undoubted: but if he were thus suffered to go
 on, the people would rise in his favour; and the
 resentment of the Romans would of course follow.
 Caiphas the high-priest, who presided in the council,
 said, It was easy to determine what to do. Whether
 Jesus were innocent or guilty, his death was cer-
 tainly a matter of expediency; and it was right that

44. A trifling objection is made here to Lazarus's coming forth,
 when he was bound hand and foot. But is there the least difficulty
 in supposing those about him to assist in disengaging him from the
 sepulchre, till the bandages were removed?

46. Here we have an instance of that hardness of heart which
 justifies our blessed Lord's remark: *If they hear not Moses and the
 prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.*

48. This is an instance of true political wisdom — never to trust
 God with any event; but, however contrary to justice, to follow the
 line of human prudence.

he should die for the benefit of the whole people.

51. 52. This speech of the high-priest's was much taken notice of afterwards, as containing a kind of prophecy, that Jesus should die (though in a different sense from what he meant it) for the nation of the Jews: and not for that nation only, but for all the children of God, however dispersed over the face of the earth. The council having determined therefore to put him to death, inquired next into the properest method of executing their designs. —
54. Jesus, in the mean time to avoid their malice, retired privately to Ephraim, a town in the wilderness.

55. Soon after, the passover was celebrated; and many Jews, according to custom, came to Jerusalem before the feast, with a view to purify themselves properly for it, according to the law. Among all these strangers, diligent search was made to find Jesus; for the chief priests had issued a strict order, that whoever knew where he was, should give immediate information to them.

CHAP. Jesus, however, instead of going directly to Jerusalem, went first to Bethany; where being invited
XII. to
1. 2.

54. Jesus walked *no more*. *Eni* rather signifies, *not yet*: and indeed the sense requires it, for he did *afterwards* walk openly.

55. The Jews could not enter the tabernacle, nor partake of the sacrifices, till they had been cleansed by the water of separation, and other ceremonies.

2. This seems to have been Simon's supper, mentioned Matt. xxvii. 6. As to Martha's serving in another person's house, it is probable, that these acts of good neighbourhood were common in

to supper, Lazarus, who had been raised from the dead, was one of the company, and Martha waited on them. Mary, in the mean time, bringing a box of very costly ointment, which spread an odour through the whole house, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped them with her hair. — At this, Judas Iscariot taking great offence, said, It would have been much better to have sold the ointment, and to have given the produce of it to the poor. — Not that he had any regard for the poor; but he was a dishonest person; and as he carried the purse, and took out of it what he wanted for his own private occasions, he wished to have it as well replenished as he could. — Jesus gave him a public rebuke; and commended Mary, who had piously anointed his body, as he said, for his approaching burial. You have the poor, he added, always with you, but this is an extraordinary occasion.

As it was soon known that Jesus was at Bethany, numbers of people resorted thither from Jerusalem, both to see him, and also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. This brought Lazarus also into danger from the chief priests; who, in their consultations, determined to put him likewise to

in Jewish villages. The chief difficulty is with regard to Mary. All the evangelists mention this fact; but St. John is the only one who specifies the person. See a note on Luke viii. 2.

3. This is the action to which the evangelist refers, chap. xi. 2.

6. This is supposed by some interpreters to be the meaning of the original, *he laid what was put therein*; that is, *he took out, or purloined it*.

11. death, as it was evident, that, through him, many of the Jews believed on Jesus.
12. Jesus was now become so respected by the people, that it was no sooner known he was at Bethany, and intended to be at the passover, than crowds of people, who had come from all parts to Jerusalem,
13. went out to meet him, carrying palm-branches in their hands, and crying, Blessed is the king of Israel,
14. who cometh in the name of the Lord. In this triumphant manner, riding upon an ass's colt, Jesus entered Jerusalem; fulfilling that prophecy of Ze-
15. chariah, *Fear not, daughter of Sion, behold thy king cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.* His disciples, how-
16. ever, at this time, recollected not the completion of the prophecy: but after his resurrection, their faith
17. was greatly confirmed by it. The people, in the meanwhile, thought of nothing but of the great
18. miracle which Jesus had performed in raising Lazarus from the dead; which was indeed the principal cause of their thronging together in such multitudes. The
19. Pharisees, therefore, durst not at present attempt to oppose a person of such popularity.
20. There happened to be at this time in Jerusalem certain Greeks, who came, as many other foreigners did, to worship, during the solemnity of the pass-
21. over, in the outward courts of the temple. These strangers having heard of the fame of Jesus, and

15. Zech. ix. 9. and the note on Matt. xxi. 9.

being solicitous to see him, found out Philip, and desired him to carry them to his master. Accord- 22.
ingly Philip and his brother Andrew acquainted Jesus with their desire. — Jesus took the opportunity of 23.
these strangers inquiring after him, to inform his disciples of that great event, when the gospel should be manifested, not only to a few Greeks, but to all the nations of the earth. — Yet as a grain of corn, 24.
said he, dies, before it produce its increase; so must the Son of man die also, before his doctrines are 25.
propagated. In the meantime, let me forewarn you to expect a time of trial. He who avoids the dangers to which his religion leads him; for the sake of any worldly advantage, neglects his best interest. But if he submit to my sufferings, he shall 26. 27.
partake of my glory. Human nature, no doubt, is disturbed at suffering. I am myself inclined to say, Father, save me from this hour: but I know the end of my coming into the world was to meet this hour. — Jesus then looking up to heaven, expressed, 28.
in a strong act of devotion, his entire resignation to the will of God. Glorify thy name, said he, O God, in me as thou thinkest fit. On this an awful voice from heaven proclaimed, *I have already glorified it,*

22. It does not appear from the text that Jesus saw the ^OGreeks: though it is most probable he did. But the evangelist mentions them only as an introduction to what Jesus said, with regard to the future progress of the gospel through the world.

27. As all the pointing of the New Testament is arbitrary, great alterations of the sense may often be introduced merely from different pointings, as in the instance of this verse. We read it; *What shall I say? Father, save me from this hour, &c.* But it conveys a very different and better sense if it be pointed thus: *What shall I say, Father, save me from this hour? but, &c.*

29. *and will exalt it with increasing glory.*—The people who stood around heard the voice, and some of them thought it was thunder. Others supposed it
 30. was an angel that spake.—Jesus told them, that the miraculous voice they had heard, came not on his account; but as a testimony from heaven for their sakes; to convince them of the manifestation of the glory of God, which was speedily to take
 31. place—when the powers of darkness, said he, shall
 32. be restrained, and when I shall be *lifted up*, and draw
 33. all nations unto me. In this Jesus alluded to the *manner* of his death, and to the celebrated type of the brazen serpent in the wilderness.

34. What Jesus had just said, brought on an inquiry from some of the Jews about the Messiah. The law spoke of Christ as *abiding for ever*; and they wished to know how that was reconcileable with his being
 35. 36. *lifted up* or taken away?—Jesus, knowing that they asked the question with no good design, instead of a direct answer, gave them warning not to neglect the present opportunity. They now, he told them, enjoyed the advantage of the light: but if they refused to walk in it, they should be left in that darkness which they preferred.—Having said

29. Wetstein ingeniously conjectures on this passage, that the Greeks thought it thunder; but the Jews, who understood the words, thought an angel spake.

34. From the words here used, it is evident that the Jews considered the expression, *Son of man*, to belong to the Messiah, in the same manner as *Son of God*.

this,

this, he left Jerusalem, and retired privately to Bethany.

Thus, notwithstanding the many miracles which he wrought, numbers who saw them did not believe in him, according to the prediction of Isaiah, *Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?* And, indeed, it was impossible that such people as Isaiah describes, when he foresaw the glorious manifestation of Christ's kingdom, could be disposed to believe the gospel: *You hear, says he, but understand not; you see, but perceive not. For the heart of this people is fat, and their ears heavy, and their eyes shut, so that they see not with their eyes, nor hear with their ears, nor understand with their heart, that they may be converted, and I should heal them.* — Notwithstanding, however, many of the principal Jewish rulers believed on him; but were too much blinded by the fashion of the world, and too much afraid of giving offence, to make a public confession of their faith.

On another occasion, as Jesus was speaking to the people in general, he told them, that a belief in God and in him were so closely united, that it was hardly possible to believe in one without believing in the other. He who believeth in me, said he, shall find the glorious effects of being restored from

41. See a note on Matt. xiii. 15.

47. 48. darkness to light. But he who doth not believe in me, though he may live secure from any judgment here, (for I come not at present to judge the world but to save it,) shall hereafter find himself called into judgment for rejecting that gospel, of which he once
49. had so gracious an offer; and which, if he be not hardened in wickedness, he must acknowledge to
50. have come from God, through whom I speak, and in whose name I publish everlasting life.

CHAP.
XIII.

1. 2. 3. Jesus now knowing that the time of his suffering approached, (for Judas, he knew, had determined to betray him,) resolved, before he suffered, to give his disciples a proof of that humility, on which he always laid so great a stress, and likewise an instance of that love for them which he had ever shown.
4. 5. He arose, therefore, from supper; and turning his upper garment aside, girt himself with a towel, and pouring water into a bason, began to wash the feet
6. of his disciples. Coming in course to Peter, that disciple would not suffer him to perform so mean
7. an office for him. But Jesus told him, he should

49. See a note on Mark xiii. 32.

5. Barclay, in his *Apology* (p. 467.), contends, that washing feet is as much an ordinance of the gospel as baptism, or the Lord's supper; and so the church of Rome seems nearly to consider it. But it appears plainly to have been intended by Jesus only as an example of humility to his disciples, just as, on another occasion, he set a little child before them. It is not mentioned *here* as a divine ordinance — it is not mentioned in any *other place* — nor was it conceived in that light by the early Christians. — Bishop Hurd considers this washing as a symbol of our being washed by the blood of Christ. *Serm. vi. serm. x.*

afterwards

afterwards explain the reason of what he did. Peter, however, still refused. On this, Jesus, alluding to that purity of mind of which washing was an emblem, replied, that if he washed him not, he should have no part with him. Peter, entering into his master's allusion, wished, as that was the case, that not only his feet, but his whole body might be washed. Jesus, still continuing the allusion, told him, that, as a person thoroughly clean might easily wipe off a little casual dirt, which he might receive in travelling; so a person well grounded in his religion would have only the common infirmities of nature to contend with. — But, added Jesus, notwithstanding you all ought to be in this state of purity, I know it is otherwise. This he spoke, alluding to that disciple who he knew would betray him.

After Jesus had thus washed his disciples' feet, he drew his garment again around him, and sat down. Then turning to them, I have now given you, said he, a great and memorable instance of that humility of mind which I have always pressed upon you, as the leading virtue of the gospel. If I have shewn humility to you, you ought certainly to shew it, on all occasions, to each other. For whatever the master does, cannot be thought unworthy of the disciple. All these things I lay before you, and you listen to them; but happy only is he who makes them the rule of his life. Yet, notwithstanding all my pre-

18. See Pf. xli. 9.

- cepts and example, there is one among you, who will fulfil the scriptures by *lifting up his heel against me*. I mention this to you before it happen, that after it hath happened, it may be a new confirmation of your faith. — And be not alarmed, as if this desertion should render your preaching less exemplary and convincing. I repeat to you, that the reception of you and your doctrine shall be always considered as the reception of me, and likewise of Him that sent me.
21. Jesus, having said this, appeared distressed, and again told his disciples, that one of them should betray him. This threw them all into great anxiety ;
22. and Peter signed to a favourite disciple, who was
23. 24. next to Jesus, to inquire whom he meant. Jesus intimated privately to that disciple, that it was he to whom he should give a sop, when he had dipped it in the dish ; which he gave to Judas Iscariot. —
25. 26. Immediately after, Jesus perceiving that Judas was now fully determined to pursue the wicked intentions of his heart, said publicly to him, What thou dost, do quickly. This was however understood by no one at the table ; and was interpreted in different ways ; some supposing, that, as Judas carried the purse, Jesus bade him make some provision for the approaching feast ; others, that he ordered him to

24. The words in the text, *lying on Jesus's breast*, allude only to the recumbent manner in which the Jews, as well as other nations, disposed themselves during a meal at table.

give something to the poor. He went out, however, 30.
immediately, under the cover of the night, which was
then drawing on.

As soon as he was gone, Jesus said, The time 31. 32.
now approaches, when the great designs of God
shall be completed by the sufferings and death of
the Son of man; and after that, by his glorious re-
surrection and ascension. I shall now, my friends, 33.
be with you only a little time longer; and, as I said
to the Jews, you cannot follow me now. But I 34.
leave my instructions with you; particularly that
great and new commandment, that you love each
other — not after the manner of the world, but after
the example which I have given you with disinterested
love: and let this be the great distinguishing mark 35.
of your being my disciples. — Here Peter, distressed 36.
at his master's saying his disciples could not follow
him *now*, asked him the reason. Jesus told them,
that his own work was now over, theirs only just
begun. They could not therefore follow him till
they had completed *their* business, as he had com-

30. It is said in the text, *he then having received the sop, went immediately out*; as if receiving the sop had been the cause. I apprehend it means only to mark the time.

34. The newness of the commandment perhaps consisted in giving our affections a more heavenly turn — *in loving each other for the sake of Christ* — and as his members. Among the ancient Christians, it was so known a badge of their profession, that it was commonly said by their heathen neighbours, *See how these Christians love one another* — Others make *new* to signify *excellent*, as it does often in the Hebrew language.

37. pleted *his*. — Peter told him, he should find no difficulty in following him now. I am ready, said
38. he, to lay down even my life for your sake. — Jesus thinking it right to check such confidence, told him, that so far from being ready to lay down his life for his sake, the cock should not crow till he had three
- CHAP. times denied him. — Then consoling the sorrow
XIV. which his disciples discovered on his talking of leaving
1. them, he bad them not be distressed, but have that
 2. confidence in him which they had in God. The mansions of happiness, said he, in the next world, which shall receive me, are intended also to receive you, and all my faithful servants. I lead
 3. the way, and make preparation for you. Hereafter in God's good time, I will receive you to myself, never to part again. Thus I have plainly discovered to you both the place you are to go to, and the way you are to go. — But the disciples, whose minds still ran on temporal things, did not clearly
 5. understand him; and Thomas in particular, expressed his doubts both as to the place and to the way. — Jesus told him, that he himself was the way. No one, said he, can go to the Father, but
 7. through me. They who know me, know the Father also. You know the Father by knowing me. —
 8. If that be the case, said Philip, give us some extraordinary sign, that we may know your *equality with*

8. Philip did not want proof of the Father, in whom he already believed; but he wanted proof of that equality which Jesus asserted he had with the Father.

the

the Father. — Have I been now so long with you, 9
 said Jesus, and is not your faith yet sufficiently
 confirmed? If you have seen me, you have in effect,
 seen the Father. Believest thou not this? Believe 10.
 my doctrines, — believe my miracles. You shall here- 11. 12.
 after have even stronger proof. After I am ascended
 to my Father, you shall be enabled to perform even
 greater works than any you have yet seen performed.
 Nay, whatever petition you shall ask of God in my 13. 14.
 name, that is necessary to carry on the great work
 intrusted to you, I will certainly grant it. — But 15.
 still remember, that the keeping of my command-
 ments must be the only test of your love. On this 16.
 depends your receiving the Holy Spirit, which I will
 pray to God to give you; and which will not leave
 you, as I do, but will continue with you through
 life. This is a heavenly aid, of which the corrupt 17.
 world, not attending to spiritual things, knows no-
 thing. You, in a degree, feel it in yourselves al-
 ready; and it shall hereafter manifest itself in all its

10. As if our Saviour had said, My words are his — my works
 are his. By knowing therefore what I teach and do, you know
 what the Father would wish to have taught and done. Therefore
 by knowing me, you know him. See a note on Mark xiii 32.

12. Our Saviour perhaps alludes here to the gift of tongues,
 which enabled the disciples, in so surprising a manner, to propa-
 gate their religion.

16. The Mahometans pretend, that this verse is a prophecy of
 the coming of Mahomet. The word *Mahomet* signifies *illustrious*
 and the word *παρακλητος* or *comforter* they pretend has been altered
 by the Christians from the original word *περικλυτος*, *illustrious*. If
 this had been the only passage, and these the only terms in which
 the Holy Spirit was promised; and if this promise had not been
 effectually completed, there might have been some pretence for the
 supposition.

glorious

- 18-19. glorious operations. — Thus, you see, I shall not leave you destitute. The world, in a little time, shall see me no more ! but with you I shall always
 20. continue to live. My life shall be the source of yours. And you shall then be assured, without any farther doubt, of that union which subsists between you and me ; and between me and the Father. —
 21. But all depends, as I have just told you, on observing those rules and doctrines which I have given you. This will shew your love to me ; and your love to me will be the foundation of my Father's love to you, and of all those gracious manifestations which I shall make to you hereafter.
 22. Judas, the brother of James, interrupting Jesus, asked him, In what manner he meant to manifest himself to them in particular, and not to the world ?
 23. Jesus told him, that not only they, but all who loved him, and kept his commandments, should experience these divine communications. But as his doctrine was his Father's also, they, of course, who obeyed not him, could have no communication with
 24. the Father. — During the time I have been with you, added Jesus, I have given you various doctrines and precepts, many of which may have gone from
 25. you ; but when I send the Comforter, the Holy Spirit of God, into your hearts, he will bring to
 26. your remembrance every thing that I have said to

18. The tender word *opφaveris* is used in the original.

22. Judas's inquiry proceeded from a misconception of Jesus's meaning. Our Saviour spoke of his spiritual kingdom. Judas understood a temporal one.

you. — And now I leave you under the full assurance, 27.
 that the peace of God shall rest upon you ; which
 is a different kind of peace from any the world
 knows : it will ease your distresses for me, and your
 apprehensions for yourselves. Indeed, if you truly 28.
 loved me, you would rejoice at my departure ; not
 only because I have promised to revisit you, but be-
 cause that state, to which I am going, is infinitely
 superior to the depressed state in which you now see
 me. These things I tell you, that hereafter when 29.
 you see them fulfilled, your faith may be confirmed.
 — I have little time now to employ among you. 30.
 The powers of darkness are now contriving their de-
 signs against me : and I am preparing to shew the 31.
 world that last great instance of my love, and of my
 submission to my Father's will.

From the room where they were sitting, they
 now retired to the mount of Olives. Here Jesus
 taking occasion probably from the vineyards through
 which he passed, began again his discourse. I am CHAP.
 the true vine said he, and my Father is the hus- XV.
 bandman. Every branch that beareth not fruit, he 1. 2.

28. *My Father is greater than I.* The plain sense of this passage,
 connected with the context, appears to be this. Jesus was com-
 forting his disciples on his leaving them : and as a topic of com-
 fort, tells them, they must not estimate the glory and happiness
 of his Father in heaven, by what they saw in him on earth. The
 two states were wholly different.

1. Perhaps these words may be spoken in opposition to what
 is said of Israel, whom the prophets often call *the vine*. See Ps.
 lxxx. 8. II. v. 7. Jer. ii. 21. Christ says, *He is now the true*
vine.

removeth;

- removeth; and ever branch that beareth fruit he pruneth; that it may bear more abundantly. Among these fruit-bearing branches I number you. But you must ever remember, that all depends on your being firmly united to me, from whence all your nourishment springs. As the branch cannot bear fruit unless it be united with the vine, neither can you, unless you be united to me. He who abideth not in me, is cast out as a withered branch; fit only for the fire. Through this union with me, your prayers to God become effectual; and by your obedience in consequence of this union, his name is glorified. My love to you is like the Father's to me. Continue in it, and shew it by keeping my commandments, as I keep his. These things have I spoken unto you, that the joys and comforts of religion may rest upon you; and that they may increase more and more, as you still improve in heavenly affections.
12. 13. Be ever careful therefore to improve in yourselves those kind affections of which I gave you an example by laying down my life for mankind.
14. While you thus continue to obey my precepts, you
15. become my friends. I call you not servants, but friends; communicating to you every spiritual gift
16. which I have received from my Father. I have received nothing from you, but have chosen you to preach my religion in the world. In the prosecution of this work, whatever you shall ask of God in my name,
17. you shall receive. And finally, be assured, that every thing I have said to you points to this great lesson, that you love one another.

Nor

Nor be surprised if the world return your love with hatred. You see how it hath hated me. This only shews how opposite its opinions are to those you have received from me. I have always told you, that the servant must not expect a better lot than his lord. They who persecute me will persecute you; and they who listen to me will listen also to you. It is on my account they persecute you; and their ignorance of God is the cause of their persecuting me. Had I not come to teach them, their ignorance had been excusable; but now they have no excuse. Their opposition, it is plain, proceeds from malice and inveterate hatred. The miracles which I have performed among them could not have been rejected, if their affections had been right; so that their ignorance is guilt. It is evident, therefore, that in me is fulfilled what the prophet says, *They hated me without a cause*. Notwithstanding, however, all this opposition, the Spirit of truth, which I shall send among you after my departure, will raise up steady professors of the gospel; among whom, you also, who have been with me from the beginning, shall be the principal witnesses and leaders. — All these sufferings, which you must needs undergo from

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CHAP.

XVI.

1. 2. 3.

18. Εμὲ πρῶτος υμῶν μισήσαντες might perhaps be better rendered, *It hated me your chief, or Lord*. Πρῶτος is so translated in 1 Tim. i. 15.

24. *They had not had sin*; that is, they had not had that great sin of which I accuse them — that of rejecting me, and flying in the face of God.

25. Pf. xxxv. 19.

2. *Whoever killeth you, will think that he doth God service*. See an effect of this religious zeal, Acts xiii. 14, &c.

irreligious men, I mention now to you, that you may not be surprised when they happen; and that a completion of what I tell you of my *sufferings* may be a foundation for your faith in my *promises*. At first I did not mention these things to you, as you were then unprepared to receive them. And even now, you do not consider the blessed mansions to which I am going, nor the Comforter, whom I cannot send to you, unless I go: but you consider only the melancholy part, and are distressed merely because I am about to leave you, though it is absolutely necessary that the Comforter should come, not only on your account, but for the sake of the world. — Of these great points he must make mankind sensible — of sin, in their rejecting me — of that justification which they can only have through my death, and of which my resurrection is a proof — and of a last judgment, in which a final sentence shall be passed on all men. — I have still many things to say to you, which you are yet unable to bear. But when the Spirit of truth is come, he will communicate to you the whole truth. He will continue my designs, by still communicating to you more and more of my intentions. Both his instructions and mine come

4. See Matt. ix. 17.

9. 10. 11. These are difficult passages; and I dare hardly suppose I have hit the true meaning of them. — I find, however, that Mr. Locke (in his *Reasonableness of Christianity*) hath given nearly the same explication of them. — *The prince of this world* denotes the devil, and seems to express the power of sin, which shall then receive its final doom.

12. See again Matt. ix. 17.

immediately from God, and are therefore entirely the same. — Jesus concluded with reminding his disciples, once more, of the shortness of the time he should be with them, and of his speedy return. 16.

But still, notwithstanding all the explanations which he had given them of his death and resurrection they did not comprehend his meaning; but questioned each other privately about it. — Jesus, knowing their anxiety, told them that as to the first of these events, it would certainly occasion grief to *them*, as well as triumph to their *enemies*: but their sorrow, like that of a woman in travel, should be turned into joy — a joy of a more lasting nature than their sorrow had been — such a joy as should never be taken from them. After that time, said Jesus, I shall no longer instruct you in person. Instead of applying to me, you shall apply directly to the Father in my name; which you have never yet done, and your petitions shall be answered. All obscure intimations will be unnecessary: the truth shall be set plainly before you. Nor is it needful for me to pray for you. The Father himself loveth you. Your faith and love have given you favour before him. You may assure yourselves, therefore, (to sum up what I have been saying,) that as I came from the Father, when I came into the world; so I shall go again to the Father, when I leave it. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28.

16. Jesus might, in these expressions, have had an eye both to his being seen after his resurrection, and likewise to a future judgment.

29. 30. The disciples replied, they now perfectly understood him—they were now convinced he knew all things; and were fully established in their belief. —
31. 32. Do you now believe? said Jesus: but be not so confident of your own strength. Within a very little while, you shall all be terrified and scattered from me; Not that I want any human assistance: but I should wish to caution you against presumption. —
33. Thus I have given you sufficient ground of comfort. In this world you must expect your trials; but follow my steps: I have overcome the world. My example will lead you to peace and happiness.

CHAP. XVII.
 1. Jesus having finished his discourse to his disciples, lifted up his eyes to heaven, and broke into this fervent prayer: — O holy Father, the important hour is come. Let it now be seen that Thou and

2. 3. 4. I have glorified each other. That great work of establishing salvation through faith in Thee and me,

5. I have finished. And now receive me into that eternal glory, which I enjoyed with Thee before the

6. 7. 8. foundation of the world. To all who were disposed to receive the truth, I have discovered it. I have set before them thy will: I have discovered to them that doctrine of salvation which I have received from Thee; and they have believed it. — For

30. The circumstance, perhaps, which struck the disciples was, that Jesus should know, without being told, (see verse 19.) what they wanted to ask him: their case was like that of Nathaniel, chap. i. 49.

these

these I put up my first petitions—these, who are
 consecrated thine and mine. As I am now about
 to leave them, O holy Father, preserve them in that
 faith and truth which they have received, that they
 may continue united in us. While I was with them
 on earth, I preserved them; and have lost none but
 such as wilfully perished. And now I come to Thee,
 I leave comfort with them in the midst [of those
 trials, which they shall meet with for the sake of
 the truth. I pray not, Almighty Father, that Thou
 wouldst remove them out of the world; but that
 Thou wouldst preserve them safe through the trials of
 it. They, as I, belong not to it. Sanctify them,
 O God, through the truth of thy holy word. As
 Thou hast sent me into the world, so I send them,
 and prepare them, through my doctrine and suffer-
 ings, to propagate the truth. — Neither do I pray
 for them alone, but for all whom they shall bring to
 the knowledge of thy holy gospel; that we may all
 be united in love, and draw the unbelieving world
 to thy truth; that I may finally communicate to all
 my followers that eternal glory which Thou hast given
 to me—that we may all be united together; and
 thy love may rest on them as it does on me.

9. 10.
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 13. 14.
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 18. 19.
 20. 21.
 22. 23.

9. The expression in the original, *I pray for them, I pray not for the world*, seems, I think, to be generally misunderstood. Our Saviour did not mean, I should suppose, to exclude *the world* from his prayers, but only to pray *first* for his chosen few. He afterwards (ver. 20.) prays for the *rest of the world*. See a similar expression, John x. 16.

24. Thus finally, O heavenly Father, grant that all
 whom Thou hast given me may ever be with me,
 and partake of that glory which I enjoyed before
 25. 26. the foundation of the world. And though the world
 hath not known Thee, yet I, who have known Thee,
 have made Thee manifest unto my faithful servants,
 that the love which Thou hast shewn to me may
 rest on them.

CHAP.
 XVIII.

Jesus, having finished his prayer, passed over the
 brook Cedron, and retired with his disciples to a
 1. part of the mount of Olives called Gethsemane;
 2. which was well known to them all as a place where
 3. he frequently resorted. Here, therefore, Judas, who
 had now settled his wicked designs with the chief
 priests, led a band of officers and soldiers to seize
 Jesus. It was night when the armed men, with
 4. 5. lanterns and torches, entered the place. — Jesus,
 knowing that his time of suffering was now come,
 did not avoid his enemies, as he had sometimes
 done, but went up to them, and inquired whom
 they sought? Upon their answering, they sought
 Jesus of Nazareth, he told them, He was the per-
 6. son. — The dignity with which he spoke, had such
 an effect upon them, that they retired back, and
 7. 8. 9. even fell to the ground. — Jesus, repeating the
 question, and receiving the same answer, told them,

1. The brook Cedron took its name from a dark gloomy valley
 (which *Cedron* signifies) through which it ran.

that if he were the only person they fought, his followers might have liberty to escape: Thus fulfilling what he had just said, *Of those thou gavest me have I left none.*

The disciples, in the mean time, seeing violence intended, began to prepare resistance; and Peter particularly drawing a sword, wounded a servant of the chief priest's, whose name was Malchus. — But Jesus checked this violence, saying, The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it? 10. 11.

Then the soldiers, having recovered themselves, seized him, and binding him, led him first to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas the high-priest, who had made that speech with regard to the expediency of one man's dying for the people. To him Annas immediately sent him. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23.

During this time, all the disciples, except Peter and one more, had dispersed themselves. These two followed the crowd; and the latter of them being known to the high-priest, entered the palace, 24.

9. See chap. xvii. 12.

12. St. John is the only evangelist who calls one of the officers who commanded on this occasion, ο χιλιάρχος, which was the title of a Roman officer. St. Luke speaks of the στρατηγοὶ τῆς ἑκκλησίας or captains of the temple, who were those priests who superintended the watches which were set round it. But it is plain from St. John that Roman soldiers were in the company; and it is probable, that the whole detachment was under the command of a Roman officer, from the castle of Antonia.

15. It is generally supposed that this other disciple was John; but it seems very unlikely that he, who was a Galilean, and an obscure fisherman, could be on so familiar a footing with the high-priest. It is rather probable, that the person who introduced Peter was not one of the twelve, but some disciple of a higher rank, who had joined Jesus's company.

and soon after obtained permission for Peter to enter. — As the door opened, a servant-maid, looking steadily at Peter, said he was certainly one of Jesus's disciples. But Peter, firmly denying it, mixed immediately with the servants, who were warming themselves at the fire.

In the mean time Jesus stood before the high-priest, who questioned him closely with regard to his disciples and his doctrines. Jesus told them his doctrines were not taught in secret; but propagated openly in the synagogues and in the temple. He might call witnesses on that head from every part.

— As he spake this, one of the officers who stood by struck him on the face, for answering the high-priest with such irreverence. — If I have spoken any thing improper, said Jesus, bear witness of it. If not, for what reason am I struck?

25. While the high-priest was thus questioning Jesus, Peter continued with the servants at the fire; one of whom observing him, said he was surely one of Jesus's disciples; which Peter again denied. —

21. Bp. Lowth, in his commentary on Isaiah liii. 8. mentions, from the Mishna, a custom among the Jews, of proclaiming a criminal's offence before he suffered; that if any body could bear witness to his innocence, he might be allowed to do it. The Bishop supposes, that our Saviour alludes here to this privilege, which was denied him.

22. Our blessed Saviour's being struck in this way, in a court of justice, shews either that there was great indecorum among the Jews in the administration of justice, or great partiality and malice, if this behaviour was particular in our Saviour's case.

Soon

Soon after, another person, a relation of him whom Peter had wounded, said, You were certainly in the garden with Jesus, when he was taken. But Peter strenuously again denied his knowing any thing of the matter. — Soon after, the cock crew.

As the Jewish Sanhedrim had not the power of life and death, their present business was only to procure matter of accusation against Jesus. Very early in the morning, therefore, he was carried from the palace of Caiphas before Pontius Pilate the Roman governor. But as it was the day before the passover, the chief priests did not enter the judgment-hall, lest they should be defiled. Pilate, therefore, went out to them, and asked them, What accusation they brought against Jesus? — From their answer, he plainly perceived they had nothing criminal to allege against him; and supposing he had been guilty only of some trivial transgression of their law, bad them try him themselves. But they assured him it was a criminal matter, and they had, therefore, no right to try him. — Thus, by throwing the trial into the hands of the Romans, whose cus-

28. Our Saviour had eaten the passover the night before, which seems to have been the precise time appointed in Ex. xii. 6. 8. But the great numbers who came to Jerusalem at the passover, made it necessary to allow more time; and it was usual for the Jews, when the country became populous, to continue the passover from Thursday evening till Friday evening; see a note on Matt. xxvi. 20. The number of Jews at these festivals was so great, that when Cestius made a public inquiry, he found that the lambs killed at one passover in Jerusalem, amounted to two million fifty-six thousand five hundred. Bel. Jud. vi.

32. See chap. iii. 14. and chap. xii. 32.

tom

and it was to crucify malefactors, the Jews unknowingly fulfilled those prophecies, which Jesus himself had delivered, with regard to the manner of his death.

33. Pilate therefore, who had now been informed of Jesus's claims to regal power, called him again before him, and asked him, what he had to say in answer to that accusation? — Jesus told him, it was a charge raised on a false interpretation of his words.
34. — Pilate said, that he himself understood not the nice distinctions of their words; but that they, who should best understand them, the rulers of his nation, had accused him. What is the interpretation, continued he to Jesus, which you give? — Jesus told him, that his kingdom was of a spiritual nature — very different from the kingdoms of this world. If I had pretended, said he, to any earthly kingdom, I should have raised an army, like other princes of the world, to have opposed my enemies. — You are then a king, said Pilate? — In one sense, answered Jesus, I am: and to the truth of this spiritual kingdom, which God is now establishing in the world, I come to bear witness; of which all who are disposed to listen to the truth will be members.
38. — Pilate carelessly asking him, What he meant by

37. Σὺ λέγεις ὅτι βασιλεὺς εἰμὶ ἐγώ: The text thus pointed, the translation would run, *Thou sayest true: for I am a king.*

38. We have a good comment on this verse in the following lines:

— What is truth? 'Twas Pilate's question put
To truth itself, that deigned him no reply:

truth?

truth? went out to the chief priests and told them, he found nothing criminal in the person they had brought before him. — But you have a custom, said he, that I should release to you a prisoner at the pass-over, shall I therefore release the king of the Jews? — To this all cried out in strong terms of opposition; requesting, that he would rather release one Barabbas—a very notorious offender, who was, at that time, in prison for sedition and murder.

Pilate, however, hoping to pacify the Jewish priests by a gentler punishment, ordered Jesus to be scourged; and the soldiers, into whose hands he was given, added derision and ill usage to the punishment. They put a crown of thorns on his head, and dressing him in a purple robe, fell down before him, saluting him as a king. Then in contempt they smote him on the face. Pilate entering into the ridicule, and hoping that it might have its effect on the chief priests, brought out Jesus to them in that ridiculous

39.

40.

CHAP.
XIX.

1.

2.

3.

4. 5.

11.

And wherefore? Will not God impart his light
To them that ask it?—Freely: 'tis his joy,
His glory, and his nature to impart:
But to the proud, uncandid, insincere,
Or negligent inquirer, not a spark.

COWPER'S Task.

From Pilate's character, indeed, we may suppose he had no great reverence for truth. Egisippus (De excid. Jerus. l. 2. c. 5.) says, that he was *Vir nequam, et parvi faciens mendacium*.

1. This account seems to differ from that of the other evangelists, who mention these circumstances *after* his condemnation. And yet, that Pilate used this chastisement by way of satisfying the Jews, seems probable from Luke xxiii. 16.

3. See the notes, Matt. xxvii. on the crown of thorns, and behaviour of the Roman soldiers.

dress,

6. drefs, and told them he had given him all the punishment which he thought he deserved. But the chief priests and officers clamoured loud to have him crucified. — Pilate told them, he must leave it then to them, for he found no fault in him. — By their law, 7. the Jews answered, he certainly deserved death, for he pretended to be the Son of God.
8. 9. This rather alarming Pilate, he carried him again into the judgment-hall, and questioned him much 10. about his origin, but received no answer. — Pilate, surprised at this, asked Jesus, Why he treated him with such neglect? Do you not know, said he, that I have the power of life and death over you? — 11. You could have no power at all over me, said Jesus, unless God for his own wise purposes had allowed it; but their sin, who delivered me into your hands, is greater than yours.
12. This speech determined Pilate to release Jesus. But the Jewish priests cried out with vehemence, If you release this person, you cannot be well inclined to Cæsar. Whoever declares himself a king, opposes 13. 14. 15. Cæsar. — This was touching Pilate in a tender 16. part; for Tiberius, the Roman emperor, was, of all princes,

7. The Jews held this language, because Judea, though a Roman province, was governed under the Romans, in many respects, by its own laws.

Some suppose, that Pilate was the *more afraid* lest Jesus might be some demi-god. Others think, that as the Jews were so very tenacious of their religious rites, Pilate was afraid, if he did not condemn Jesus it might occasion a sedition.

14. The difficulty with regard to the mode of reckoning time between John and the other evangelists, is commonly reconciled by

princes, the most jealous in his temper; and the most apprehensive of a rival. Pilate therefore, alarmed at this, sat down in a portico, which was called in Hebrew, Gabbatha, from its being a *raised pavement*; and ordering Jesus again before him, he endeavoured to turn the idea which had been suggested to him into derision, by presenting Jesus to the people under the name of *their king*. On this the chief priests, with great vehemence, cried out, Away with him; away with him: crucify him. — What! said Pilate, shall I crucify your king? — The chief priests replied, We have no king but Cæsar. — Pilate at length gave way to the tumult, and delivered Jesus into their hands.

It was about six o'clock in the morning when they led him to execution, making him bear his cross. — At a place called Golgotha, they crucified him; and to increase the ignominy, they crucified a malefactor on each side of him. — On the cross Pilate had placed an inscription in three languages, Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. But it gave offence to the chief priests, and they desired Pilate to write only, *who pretended to be king of the Jews*. But Pilate refused to make any alteration.

by supposing that they followed the Jewish mode; and John, who wrote after the destruction of Jerusalem, followed the Roman. — This, however, does not set to rights all the little difficulties with regard to time, which occur among the several evangelists. I think the best answer is, they are of little moment.

In

23. 24. In the mean time the soldiers divided his garments among them; but as his inner coat was without a seam, instead of rending it, they cast lots for it: thus remarkably fulfilling that prophecy in the Psalms, *They parted my garments among them; and for my vesture they cast lots.*

25. 26. 27. During this melancholy scene, the mother of Jesus, with some other women who had attended him, stood by his cross. Jesus seeing John near them, recommended his mother to his particular care. He took her home therefore, and kept her with him while she lived.

28. Jesus knowing that every thing relative to his life and death was now fulfilled, to accomplish the last prophecy which mentioned *their giving him vinegar to drink*, complained of thirst. On this, one of the soldiers dipped a sponge in vinegar, mixed with hyssop, and putting it at the end of a reed, reached it to his mouth. Jesus tasting it, said, It is finished; and bowing his head, expired.

24. Pl. xxii. 18.

29. The text says, *put it upon hyssop*; and commentators explain it by saying, hyssop grows in the east, with a long stem like a reed. But vinegar and hyssop (which was in frequent use among the Jews, see Ex. xii. 22. Levit. xiv. 4. Num. xix. 6.) made together a medicated draught, often given to criminals. In this passage it appears as if a bunch of hyssop had been laid upon a piece of sponge, and dipped in vinegar. The reed is not mentioned, but supposed. In Pliny's Natural History (xxiii. 1.) we have the vinegar, the sponge, and the bunch of hyssop brought together, though on a different occasion. — *Calidum acetum, in spongia appositum, adjecto hyssopi fasciculo, medetur sedis vitii.* — See also lib. xiv. 16.

Pl.

In

In the mean time, the Jews, not knowing that
 Jesus was dead, and wishing the bodies to be re-
 moved before the sabbath, (which being in the
 passover week, was a sabbath of more than ordinary
 solemnity,) begged Pilate to order the legs of the
 criminals to be broken; that if there should be any
 remains of life in them, on their being taken down
 sooner than usual, they might not be able to escape.
 The soldiers accordingly broke the legs of the two
 criminals who were executed with Jesus; but find-
 ing that Jesus himself was certainly dead, they
 thought it unnecessary to break his legs: one of
 them, however, thrust a spear into his side, from
 which issued blood and water. — All these circum-
 stances the writer of this account himself saw, and
 bears testimony to the truth of them. On the two
 last he lays a particular stress; the former complet-
 ing that prophetic type of the paschal lamb; *of which*
a bone was not to be broken: and the latter fulfilling a
 prophecy of Zechariah, *they shall look on him whom*
they have pierced.

At Arimathea lived a person of some consequence,
 whose name was Joseph. He was a disciple of
 Jesus; but through fear of the Jews, had kept his
 opinions to himself. At his master's death, however,

34. Anatomists observe that from the appearance both of
 blood and water, it was plain the heart was pierced; and of course
 that Jesus was dead.

36. Ex. xii. 46.

37. Zech. xii. 10.

- he assumed new courage, and gave a noble instance of his faith. In the midst of all that ignominy and general disappointment which overwhelmed the cause of Jesus, during the short period between his death and resurrection, this man, preserving his faith entire, went boldly to Pilate, and begged leave to take the body from the cross, that it might not be disgraced by being cast out among common malefactors.
39. In this pious office he was assisted by Nicodemus, another secret disciple, who brought with him a large quantity of spices, such as were used commonly in
40. embalming. These two took the body from the
41. 42. cross; and as it was late in the evening before the sabbath, and they were pressed for time, they wrapped it up only in linen with the spices, intending afterwards to embalm it properly. Having done this, they laid it in a new sepulchre in a garden, near the place of execution, where it lay during the sabbath.

CHAP. On the morning after, very early, Mary Magda-
 XX. len, who had seen where the body had been deposited,

1. 2.

39. *About an hundred pounds weight*, says the text. This was indeed a very large quantity. But the Jews estimated their respect by the quantity of spices used in embalming the body of the deceased. Westein quotes a passage from the Talmud, in which it is said, that eighty pounds of spices were used at the funeral of Gamaliel:—Bowyer substitutes a reading, which makes the sense thus: *a mixture of myrrh and aloes, of about a pound each*.—But the Jews used sometimes not only to anoint the body, but to lay it in a bed of spices: see 2 Chron. xvi. 14, where the funeral of Asa is described.

1. The Jewish sabbath was Saturday. *The morning after*, therefore, answers to our Sunday; which, from the great event of Christ's resurrection, became the Christian sabbath.

went



went to the sepulchre, and found the stone removed which had closed its mouth. At this she was greatly disturbed, and ran to tell Peter and John what she had seen, who immediately hastened to the sepulchre. John arriving first, looked in, and saw the linen clothes lying in order. Peter coming afterwards, entered the sepulchre, and saw the clothes lying, as John had described them, and the napkin folded by itself, which had been bound round the head. John also then went in, and comparing all things together, began to be convinced, that Jesus was risen: for of that *full conviction*, which he might have had from the prophets, he had yet no idea. — With this imperfect information, the two disciples returned to their brethren.

After they were gone, Mary, who still continued in great affliction about the place, went again to the sepulchre, and looking in, saw two angels sitting, one at the head, the other at the feet, where the body had lain. On their inquiry into the cause of her distress, she told them her great disappointment at not finding the body. Then turning from the sepulchre, she saw Jesus himself standing before her,

11. There is much difficulty in reconciling St. John's account of Mary, with the accounts of the other evangelists. They all agree that Mary saw the angels: but they differ as to the point of time. Nor do I see how this matter can be reconciled with any appearance of probability. We are constrained therefore, I think, in this passage, as in many others, to allow the variations of the evangelists in trifling matters, and consider them only as attentive to the *grand points* they had in view. See a note on Matt. xxviii. 1.

15. but did not know him. On his asking her the cause of her sorrow, she supposing him to be the gardener, desired to know where he had laid the body, if he had taken it away, and she would remove it, —
16. Jesus looking at her, said, Mary! On this she instantly knew him, and falling down at his feet, cried out, in a transport of joy, My Master and my
17. Lord! — Jesus said, do not now delay me, you shall have other opportunities of seeing me before my ascension. But go now to my brethren, and tell them, that I am risen from the dead, and shall speedily ascend to that gracious God who will be their Father, as he is mine.
18. 19. On the evening of that very day (the first day of the week) on which Mary had told these things to the disciples, as they were assembled privately for fear of the Jews, Jesus stood in the midst of them,
20. and having blessed them, shewed them his hands and his side, which fully convinced them of the reality of his appearance, and threw them into an
21. ecstasy of joy. He then blessed them again, and told them, he sent them into the world to continue that gracious work of preaching the gospel which

17. *Go to my brethren, &c.* There is something inexpressibly tender in this speech. Notwithstanding their late shameful desertion of him, he (who knew *the spirit was willing though the flesh was weak*) sends to them in the kindest manner, and never touches more on their fault. Just so the prodigal son was received: Luke xv. 20.

his Father had intrusted to him: adding, with a significant sign of breathing on them, a repetition of the promises of the Holy Ghost, and of the power of proclaiming remission of sins on the terms of the gospel.

It happened, that Thomas was not with the disciples when Jesus first appeared to them. On his being informed therefore of it, he declared, that he would not believe it, unless he himself should be an eye-witness, and should see the prints of the nails in his hands, and of the spear in his side. — A week after, when the disciples were again assembled in the same private manner, and Thomas with them, Jesus, as before, appeared among them, and blessed them. He then gave Thomas the testimony he required, and bad him be no longer incredulous. Thomas, fully

22. The sign of *breathing on them*, was significant, like other signs, in expressing, as nearly as could be adapted to our conceptions, the operation intended. Thus in another passage, *The wind bloweth, &c. so is every one that is born of the Spirit.* — We need not suppose this is meant as an *actual giving* of the Holy Ghost, which was formally given afterwards, but as referring to that future time.

25. All these particulars of the resurrection of Jesus, and of the transactions afterwards, are told in the original with that genuine simplicity which evinces truth, and which no other mode of relation can equal. For the sake of uniformity, however, I am constrained to adopt a more modern mode of expression.

25. Βάλω τον δακτυλον εις should not be rendered, *thrust my hands into*; but rather, *lay my finger upon*.

26. *And after eight days* — that is, according to the Jewish reckoning, on the first day of the week, or our Sunday.

28. As a comment on this passage, I shall transcribe the following observations from a valuable book. — “When Thomas, overcome by the evidence our Lord had given him, and melted

29. fully convinced, cried out in all the earnestness of faith, My Lord and my God! — Thomas, said Jesus, thou hast believed in my resurrection, because thou hast seen me; but it is not every one who can have such evidence. Blessed is he who can ground his faith on such testimony as the wisdom of God thinks proper to vouchsafe.
30. Other evidences of his resurrection Jesus afforded his disciples, which are not here taken notice of. But these are a sufficient ground for our faith in him as the Messiah.

by his condescension, broke out, in the language of true faith, into that exclamation, My Lord and my God! Thomas, replied our Lord, thou hast believed because thou hast seen me: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. — This passage demands all our attention. Had faith sprung from any inward impression, Thomas might as well have believed before this sensible conviction as after it. But he withheld his assent till it was extorted from him by the evidence of his senses. Upon which our Lord's remark is, *Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.* That is, the ordinary means of blessing mankind with the knowledge of the Christian faith, will be by that evidence which thou hast resisted — the testimony of well informed witnesses. The evidence of sense is indeed given to a few, that they may be my chosen witnesses to the rest of the world: but this kind of evidence cannot be imparted to all: the work of general conversion must be carried on by rational and historical evidence. It must be acknowledged that this occurrence is extremely remarkable, and seems to have been disposed by our Lord on purpose to lay open to us, in one striking incident, the whole doctrine of the origin of faith." Rotheram's Essay on Faith, p. 88. — I may add that this verse (28.) is always considered as a strong argument in favour of the divinity of our Saviour.

30. Some suppose the evangelist to have concluded his gospel at this chapter; but there seems to be no ground for the supposition; except that it appears his gospel *might* have concluded very well here.

After

After this, when the disciples met Jesus, as he had appointed them, in Galilee, he discovered himself to them in this manner. — As Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee, with Thomas, Nathaniel, and two other disciples, had been exercising their calling of fishing on the lake of Tiberias; after a toilsome night, they were drawing near the shore. There Jesus stood; but was not seen distinctly enough to be known. Finding they had taken nothing, he bad them cast their net on the right side of the boat; which having done, they inclosed so great a quantity of fish, that they were scarce able to drag them. — John immediately turning to Peter, said, It is the Lord. — On which Peter, girding his coat about him, threw himself into the sea; while the other disciples came to shore in the boat dragging the net, which was unbroken, notwithstanding the great number of fishes which it inclosed — On their landing they found a fire, and preparations for a meal; which was furnished from the fish they had taken. But the disciples were under such awe and reverence at the presence of Jesus, that none of them, though they well knew him, durst accost him as their master. — This was the third time that Jesus had shewn

CHAP.
XXI.

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2. 3. 4.

5. 6.

7. 8. 9. 10.
11. 12. 13.

14.

7. It is pleasing and instructive to see that eager zeal which St. Peter, impressed probably with a sense of his late denial, shews on this occasion.

11. The text says, *full of great fishes, a hundred, and fifty, and three*. With regard to the *greatness* of some of the fish which are found in this lake, Hafslequiff speaks of one species called the Charmud, which weighs often thirty pounds. — It is *curious* also, though not otherwise remarkable, that Oppian, in his poem on fishing, mentions this precise number, as all the kinds of fish with which he was acquainted.

- himself, in a public manner, to his disciples since
 15. 16. 17. his resurrection. — After they had eaten, Jesus,
 alluding to Peter's late denial of him, asked, Whe-
 ther his affection to him was now superior to all
 worldly things? And this question he put three
 times to him; bidding him, after each confession,
 18. 19. Feed his flock. Peter expressed his unhappiness at
 his master's repeating the question: on which Jesus
 informed him, that he should hereafter be a great
 light in the Christian world; and should finally glo-
 rify God by laying down his life for the gospel.
 The very manner of his death Jesus pointed out.
 Your hands, said he, shall hereafter be stretched out
 against your will; and another shall gird you, and
 20. 21. carry you whither you would not. — Jesus then
 bidding his disciples follow him, Peter turned round,
 and observing John near his master, asked, What
 22. should become of him? — If I choose, answered
 Jesus, to have him wait till I come, what is that
 23. to you? follow you me. — This answer gave occa-
 sion to an opinion, that that disciple should never
 die. But Jesus's speech really conveyed no such
 meaning; but was only a gentle rebuke to Peter for
 his curiosity.

15. *Lovest thou me more than these?* Some interpret this pas-
 sage as if Jesus had said, *more than these disciples love me.* But
 this would have been a question which Peter could not well have
 answered.

17. The allegorist says, Jesus asked the question three times,
 alluding to the minister's threefold office of preaching, prayer,
 and a holy life. Others say, Christ obliged him to these three
 confessions, for his three denials. Probably nothing more was in-
 tended than an earnest manner of speaking.

18. We have the authority of antiquity for supposing that Peter
 was crucified.

The

The disciple, about whom Peter asked the question, is the writer of this gospel; and his testimony may be depended on as true. But he means not to give an account of every thing that Jesus said and did, which would engage him in a work much greater than is necessary. 24-
25.

25. Some, offended at this hyperbolical mode of speaking, say the sense will allow the words to mean, *the world could not receive (or comprehend) the books, &c.* But I think this is refinement. — Others again wish we had more of our blessed Saviour's discourses, parables, and miracles recorded. That he did and said many things which are not recorded, we have several hints, besides this passage of St. John. The *mighty works* done at Chorazin, to which our Saviour alludes (Matt. xi. 21.), are no where mentioned. Nor is that saying of Christ's which St. Paul records, that it is *more blessed to give than to receive* (Acts xx. 35.); and we are often told that Jesus went preaching and working miracles about towns and villages: and yet neither the discourses he held, nor the works he performed, are related. — In answer to all this we allege, that this matter, no doubt, as all others, was directed by the wisdom of an over-ruling providence. Let us suppose that the New Testament had extended, as no doubt it might have done, to half a dozen folios, could the poor either have purchased or have read such bulky volumes? Without doubt, therefore, the size of the New Testament, like its contents, was accommodated to the situation of the generality of mankind. Enough is given to ground our faith and practice. More therefore would have been unnecessary.

END OF THE GOSPEL BY ST. JOHN.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.





